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Jack is Dead

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Jack is ~~Dead~~

A Thesis

Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the
University of New Orleans
in partial fulfillment of the
requirements of the degree of

Master of Fine Arts
In
Film, Theatre and Communication Arts
Creative Writing

by

Connie “Conrad” Reeder

B. A. Thomas A. Edison State College, 2005

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Dedication

To Cimcie and Ashlee for being alive.

Acknowledgment

I wish to thank the following people for their unwavering support: my husband, Roger Nichols; my daughters, Cimcie and Ashlee; my goddaughter, Daniella; my sisters, Lois, Betty, and Patty; the sisters of my heart, Melinda, Ana Gladys, and Pamela Wolfe—my fellow trickster; and much gratitude to Linda Wolverton for proof reading. I rely daily on the treasured memories of my loving parents, Glade and Dorothea.

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A very special thanks goes to my friend, John Denver, for his inspirational life and the extraordinary legacy he leaves behind.

Disclaimer

This is a work of fiction. Any resemblance to persons living, dead or otherwise, and any real event is purely coincidental.

Jack is ~~Dead~~

A new play in two acts
with two original songs

By Conrad Reeder

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JACK IS ~~DEAD~~

by

Conrad Reeder

Cast In Order of Appearance

Claudia Renoir (indeterminate middle age)

Diane Cody (29)

D'ogg (pronounced Dee-awg) Ageless.

Jack Cody (35)

Preacher Bob* (56)

Alan Thane (43)

Leonard (39)

* Preacher Bob and Leonard are played by the same actor.

Setting

The story takes place one stormy afternoon in the eclectic dining room of Claudia Renoir's penthouse located on Riverside Drive in present day New York City. Around the room are chic cabinets filled with porcelain and china. A large mirror, ancient originals, and modern art are hung on the walls. Antique tables, and candles are scattered about. In the center of the dining room is a table with three chairs. A black cloth covers the table with a large round lump in the middle. A small wooden box containing Tarot cards is nearby. Boxes of tissues are scattered about. Windows upstage overlook Riverside Park and the Hudson River. A rocking chair rocks.

ACT ONE

Don Giovanni, Riposate, vezzose ragazze!
(Mozart/Ponte)

Thunder. Lightening.

Doorbell.

CLAUDIA enters through a door from the kitchen (offstage), and moves her statuesque body about as if gliding on air. She wears a colorful designer dress, and an exquisite necklace. Her hair is swept up into a French-twist. She adjusts something in a cabinet, and stops to check her hair in the mirror.

CLAUDIA opens the door to reveal DIANE.

Diane is dressed casually with a purse is on her shoulder. Her slightly disheveled appearance does not belie her good looks and trim figure.

Don Giovanni fades out.

CLAUDIA

Hello.

DIANE

I have an appointment with Madame Renoir.

CLAUDIA

Diane, right? I've been expecting you.

DIANE

You're Madame Renoir?

CLAUDIA

Is something wrong?

DIANE

No, but...it's just that...I was expecting someone, someone more like...

CLAUDIA

Like a gypsy?

DIANE

Yes, to be honest.

CLAUDIA

Please, my dear, come in.

DIANE steps in. CLAUDIA shuts the door.

CLAUDIA (cont'd)

There is much to admire about the Romani culture, but my ancestors were from Scotland. My grandparents were ranchers in Texas.

DIANE

My grandparents were ranchers, too.

CLAUDIA guides a hesitant Diane into the room.

CLAUDIA

Well, my dear, we are both certainly a long way from the ranch, aren't we?

(Beat)

DIANE

Thank you for seeing me on such short notice.

CLAUDIA

You sounded so desperate, and of course, when you said you were a friend of Leonard's, well anything for dear Leonard. We ladies need our hairdressers, don't we? And I think Leonard is the best colorist in Manhattan. (studies Diane's hair). Your color is fabulous.

DIANE

Leonard is convinced he talked to Blaze.

CLAUDIA

Ahh yes. Blaze came through quite strong. You came alone, I see.

DIANE

I prefer that no one knows about this.

CLAUDIA

All right then...

DIANE

So, we are alone?

CLAUDIA

Yes, as I think I told you on the phone, this happens to be my maid's day off. Of course, I always have my Spirit friends around to keep me company.

DIANE

You mean dead people?

CLAUDIA

I prefer to call them Spirits.

DIANE

And they are in the room right now?

CLAUDIA

At this very moment, I'm not receiving anyone, but that doesn't mean they're not here. Most Spirits wait for an invitation.

Thunder. Lightening.

CLAUDIA (cont'd)

Looks like you made it just in time. The heavens are about to open up.

DIANE

I should warn you, I've never really believed in psychics.

CLAUDIA

My dear, you are confused about what I do. I am a Channeler. I allow Spirit to enter my body and use me to communicate with the living.

DIANE

Sounds disgusting.

CLAUDIA

(laughs)

Quite the opposite I assure you. I consider it a blessing to commune with Spirit. But I'm confused. That is why you are here? To talk to someone who has passed over?

DIANE

If that's possible.

CLAUDIA

(Points toward dining table)

Please, have a seat. May I get you some tea?

CLAUDIA walks toward the kitchen door.

DIANE

No. I'm fine.

CLAUDIA stops mid-step, and turns.

CLAUDIA

Well, if it's all right with you I think I'll have some. I'll bring you a cup anyway, in case you change your mind.

DIANE shrugs. Looks at her watch.

CLAUDIA (cont'd)

Don't worry dear, you will get your full hour.

DIANE

It's not that. It's just that, theoretically I'm supposed to be on a plane in a couple hours.

CLAUDIA

Theoretically?

DIANE

It's complicated. I'm, I'm getting married tomorrow.

CLAUDIA

I see. Congratulations!

CLAUDIA whisks off the tablecloth to reveal a huge rock quartz Crystal Ball. She disappears through the door to the off-stage kitchen.

DIANE walks over to look out the window.

Crystal Ball glows briefly. Wind Chimes. A flash of light.

D'OGG (pronounced Dee-awg) enters excitedly reading an official-looking missive; an otherworldly creature with tethers and headgear that resembles floppy ears.

DIANE and CLAUDIA cannot see or hear D'ogg.

D'OGG howls waving the missive.

D'OGG

We did it!

D'OGG stuffs the missive in a pocket.

DIANE

(To Herself)

Probably a waste of three hundred dollars anyway.

CLAUDIA O.S.

Did you say something dear?

D'OGG sniffs Diane.

DIANE

(Loud)

Just watching the waste barges on the Hudson.

CLAUDIA reappears carrying two teacups.

D'OGG sniffs around the women.

CLAUDIA offers Diane tea, but DIANE waves her off, so she places the cups on the table.

CLAUDIA

Yes, so much waste. I read somewhere there are 11,000 tons of garbage collected daily in the metropolis of New York. That's incomprehensible. I'm no expert, but I question the merit of our landfill practices. Don't you, my dear?

DIANE

I gave up on humans a long time ago. You sound like Jack. He was always trying to save the planet.

CLAUDIA

Jack sounds like someone I would like.

DIANE

Everyone liked Jack. Jack is dead.

CLAUDIA

I prefer to say his Spirit has crossed over.

DIANE

Whatever. Jack is still dead.

DIANE cries. CLAUDIA hands her a tissue.

CLAUDIA

You poor dear. Is Jack our contact for today?

Diane shakes head "yes".

CLAUDIA (cont'd)

Please Diane, do sit down.

DIANE walks slowly over to the table and sits.

DIANE

Wow, a real Crystal Ball. What does it do?

DIANE reaches for the Crystal Ball. CLAUDIA grabs Diane's arm.

CLAUDIA

Don't touch it! The Crystal is a gateway to the Astral Plane where Spirits reside. My thought-waves focus on the Crystal, and a vortex of sorts is created for Spirits to funnel or flow through to enter my body.

DIANE

So, my touching it would interrupt that flow?

CLAUDIA

No, I don't want any fingerprints on it. I just polished the damn thing.

DIANE watches CLAUDIA walk around the room lighting incense and candles, all the while followed by D'OGG, who playfully shadows her, blowing the candle out as soon as she lights it.

DIANE

Is there a window open somewhere?

CLAUDIA

No dear, I think we may have company.

DIANE

Company?

CLAUDIA

A Spirit.

Lightening. Thunder.

DIANE

I thought you had to invite them?

CLAUDIA

Usually, but some Spirits have a very strong personality, and a mind of their own. They come and go as they please. I suspect this is my poet friend, who loves to tease me.

D'OGG bows, as if Diane could see him.

DIANE

How convenient.

CLAUDIA

How so, dear?

DIANE

Just a little suspect, don't you think? Candles blowing out and all that.

D'OGG pushes Diane's purse to the ground.

DIANE jumps up, clutching her purse.

DIANE (cont'd)

Hey!

CLAUDIA touches Diane's shoulder.

CLAUDIA

Relax dear. Please, have a seat.

DIANE slowly sits, still clutching her purse.

CLAUDIA sits at the table.

D'OGG continues to sniff around as if looking for someone.

DIANE

That felt like someone pushed my bag off of my shoulder!

CLAUDIA

That sounds like my poet friend. This Spirit can be very playful.

DIANE

A poet?

CLAUDIA

That's just my name for him. I suppose it could be a she. I'm never really quite sure which. I sense a being not of this planet. But it does seem that every time I feel the presence of this particular Spirit, poems just pop into my head. Because I could not stop for Death, / He kindly stopped for me; / The carriage held but just ourselves / And Immortality.

DIANE

Dickinson.

CLAUDIA

Yes. Emily had an ability to see beyond appearances. Very misunderstood in her day.

D'OGG

AARRRFFF. Pithy is more like it. Emily was no fun. (To Claudia) Oh, blessed one of tender breast/ the heiress of such succor sweet/ In fields of flowers may we rest/ But first save Jack, fait accompli!

D'OGG exits.

DIANE

I could have sworn someone or something pushed my bag off.

CLAUDIA

Tell me about you, Diane. Was Jack your husband?

DIANE

That's how you psychics do it, isn't it? You get me to answer questions to get information out of me.

CLAUDIA

I see we have bridges to cross. I was merely curious about Jack, since he is why you are here. But as I said, I am not a psychic. My powers of prediction are no better than a Chinese fortune cookie. I am a Channel to the Other Life. Think of me as a sort of telephone between the visible and the invisible world.

DIANE

(Sarcastic)

Are you wireless?

CLAUDIA

(Laughs)

Well, yes, it seems so. My earliest memories are of my grandmother's wind chimes that brought her messages from Spirit. She called them her ancestor chimes.

DIANE

Ancestor chimes. Very ironic.

CLAUDIA

How so dear?

DIANE

Wind and chimes. They remind me of Jack.

CLAUDIA

That's a good sign for our session.

DIANE

Not much wind in here.

CLAUDIA

Which is why I have enlisted the more reliable Crystal Ball for my purposes.

DIANE

I just find all this so hard to believe.

D'OGG gallops across the stage.

CLAUDIA

I'm not surprised. We live in a culture that ridicules, or even dismisses events that cannot be explained by conventional science.

DIANE

I try not to think about this spiritual stuff too much. Jack is the enlightened one of the family. (Beat) Jack is, I mean was, my older brother.

DIANE cries. CLAUDIA comforts her.

CLAUDIA

Why don't you gaze at the Crystal? Think of a place where you feel safe. A forest scene or perhaps the beach. Relax.

DIANE

So crazy to think about talking to dead people. Madame...is Renoir even your real name?

CLAUDIA

Please, call me Claudia. And Renoir is my real name in that I married a Renoir. My darling Henri.

Diane, talking to people who have passed over is no crazier than talking to a God who never answers, and millions of people do it every day. Are they all crazy? At least in my experience, real dead people sometimes talk back.

DIANE

Since Jack died, nothing seems real.

CLAUDIA

Have you ever heard of Niels Bohr?

DIANE

A play...on Broadway. Something to do with atoms?

CLAUDIA

That's right. Bohr won a Nobel Prize in physics and he once said, "Everything we call real is made up of things that cannot be regarded as real." So, while the so-called experts search for what is real, I will continue to thoroughly enjoy the real experiences of my life.

DIANE

My life is an experience of hell at the moment.

CLAUDIA

Oh dear! Perhaps that will change.

Lights flicker.

ANGELIC VOICES

Hallelujah!

Wind Chimes.

JACK enters. Boyish good looks. He wears a colorful shirt, cowboy boots, and has a guitar slung over his shoulder. He walks around dazed, confused. Diane and Claudia cannot see or hear Jack.

DIANE

Did you hear something?

CLAUDIA

No. Alright my dear, look at the Crystal and relax. Remember, perception can change in an instant.

DIANE

One minute my brother's alive telling me to make dinner reservations, the next minute he's crashed, gone. No matter how I would like to perceive it, Jack is still dead.

CLAUDIA

Unfortunately, we cannot change events in the past, but we can change how we react to these events in the present.

JACK walks around Diane.

JACK

Diane. Did you make the reservations for Anton's?

DIANE

All I've done since Jack died is cry, and wish I were dead, too.

JACK

Dead? I must be dreaming.

JACK wanders off to the side looking around puzzled.

CLAUDIA

Hopefully, your wedding will cheer you up.

JACK

Diane! You're getting married? Fantastic!

DIANE

At least I won't be poor.

JACK

Why can't she hear me?

CLAUDIA

The material things of this world do not enrich one's inner spirit.

DIANE

What's wrong with being rich?

CLAUDIA

Nothing, but for some people, money and the things it can buy are all that matter, and they will do anything to get it.

DIANE

Looks like you spend a lot of money on the things money can buy.

CLAUDIA

I enjoy nice things. But there is a difference between creating a comfortable existence for yourself and hoarding money at the expense of another's well-being.

DIANE

You just described my fiancé, Alan. He only cares about hoarding money.

JACK

(to Diane)

Alan? Your fiancé? Are you crazy? Why didn't you tell me?

DIANE

I have these dreams about Jack, like he's saying something to me. He's talking, but I can't make out the words. I guess that doesn't sound weird to someone like you.

JACK

I'm right here, Diane! Talk to me!

CLAUDIA

Jack probably needs to tell you something before he can move on. Maybe it's to wish you well in your new marriage.

Diane cries.

JACK

No! I will not let you marry Alan and ruin your life. I know you don't love him. This is stupid. I'm yelling at Diane in a dream....

CLAUDIA

There, there, dear, you still have some time to decide. I would think you should be happy about getting married.

DIANE

It's hard to be happy when everybody you love is dead.

CLAUDIA

(Beat) Perhaps we will connect with Jack's Spirit and ease some of your pain.

JACK

I get it. My body is asleep somewhere and I'm astral traveling. I've done this before. But why wouldn't I know anything about Diane and Alan getting married?

JACK wanders around listening to the women.

CLAUDIA puts Tarot cards on the table in front of Diane.

CLAUDIA

Let's see if the Tarot cards have some insight we can use. Cut the cards. Think about Jack and what you want to ask him.

DIANE picks up the cards.

DIANE

I need to know if Alan had anything to do with Jack's plane crash and what happened to Jack's will? The lawyer doesn't have it and I've looked...

CLAUDIA

It isn't necessary to tell me what you're asking, dear.

JACK

Plane crash? This is a nightmare.

JACK runs off. DIANE cuts the cards quickly, and puts them back as if her hand is on fire. CLAUDIA places several cards in front of Diane, and picks one up.

CLAUDIA

Here is some light. The Hermit is in a position that indicates you are indeed connecting with your soul. He holds the lamp of truth. The spark of consciousness.

DIANE takes the card and studies it.

D'OGG runs in sniffing around.

D'OGG

Zounds! I just missed him.

D'OGG runs off.

DIANE

An old man in rags wandering around holding a light. Looks like a street person to me.

DIANE puts the card down. CLAUDIA picks up another card.

CLAUDIA

Here we have the King of Pentacles. This man has dark hair and eyes, a rich man, who owns large estates. This card is reversed, indicating a dangerous man, capable of bribery.

DIANE

That sounds like Alan.

CLAUDIA

Alan is dangerous?

DIANE

I can't prove it, but I have my suspicions. Alan was also Jack's business manager.

CLAUDIA

This five of wands crossing the King is a sign of great struggle. It does not bode well for a happy relationship.

DIANE

I didn't need a Tarot card to tell me that.

CLAUDIA

If you suspect Alan of wrongdoing, why in heaven's name are you marrying him?

DIANE

I can't prove Alan did anything wrong. I just have these...bad feelings. Jack was an excellent pilot. He also told me right before he died that he was going to fire Alan. Without Jack's will, Alan controls all the finances, and I'm practically on the street.

CLAUDIA

Very disturbing. I certainly don't sense any romance in this union.

JACK enters distressed.

DIANE

Romance? Alan has made me an offer I can't refuse.

JACK gets in Diane's face.

JACK

Booga Booga Boo!

CLAUDIA

This is obviously a business arrangement, not a marriage. I've always felt a marriage should be a business and a romance.

JACK

Why can't she hear me? Why can't I wake up?

JACK runs off.

DIANE

Survival is more like it. Aunt Tilly and I need a home right now.

CLAUDIA

I see. (Beat) Were you and Jack close?

DIANE

We had our moments. Jack was famous before I even got out of high school, and he hasn't been around for a lot of my life. The irony is, Jack and I have been getting along a lot better since our parents died. He got me a job with his publicist.

CLAUDIA

Do you have any other family?

DIANE

No, just Aunt Tilly.

D'OGG gallops in sniffing around.

CLAUDIA

How about Jack? Any children?

D'OGG

He is here somewhere.

DIANE

No. Jack was married a couple of times, but nothing stuck. I guess neither one of us has been very lucky in love.

CLAUDIA

I sense life hasn't been easy for you.

D'OGG

When the hurly-burly's done, I'll find this wayward setting sun. I'm coming Jack, hang on!

D'OGG exits.

DIANE

It's like I'm invisible. Did anyone care that I had a role in an Off-Off-Broadway play? No. And all the reviewers could talk about was how I was Jack's sister, like that was why I got the part. I'm a damn good actress!

CLAUDIA

I see.

DIANE

And relationships? Forget it. I can never be sure if people want me around for me or just to get close to Jack. Like, like Sam.

CLAUDIA

Sam?

DIANE

My last boyfriend. Never date a songwriter when your brother is a famous singer. Sam was only using me to get a song idea to Jack.

CLAUDIA

I'm sorry, dear.

DIANE

Yeah, well, I'm the idiot. (Beat) I truly believed with all my heart that he was the one.

CLAUDIA

Sounds like you still have feelings for Sam.

DIANE

I'm not here to talk about Sam.

Beat.

CLAUDIA

Would I know Jack?

DIANE

Ever hear of the song, Carried By The Wind?

CLAUDIA

Yes, of course! Oh, that Jack. Jack Cody. Carried By The Wind. I love that song. Henrí and I played that song at our wedding. I can see why Ancestor Chimes would remind you of Jack.

Diane cries, blows her nose.

DIANE

I guess you could say I'm having trouble moving on.

CLAUDIA

My dear, his crash was not so long ago. This grief takes time to heal.

DIANE

Can you really contact him?

CLAUDIA

What was Jack's full name?

DIANE

Henry John Christoph the Third.

Lights flicker.

ANGELIC VOICES

Hallelujah!

Wind Chimes.

JACK enters. D'OGG enters opposite, and gallops up to Jack.

DIANE

Did you hear something?

CLAUDIA

I think it's just the storm, dear. Let's see what else the cards can tell us.

DIANE and CLAUDIA continue to inaudibly chat about the cards; unable to see or hear beings in the Other Life.

JACK

Would someone please tell me what is going on around here!?

D'OGG & ANGELIC VOICES

THAT A MAN SHOULD ARISE, YOU ARE TRANSPARENT MY FRIEND. YOU HAVE HAD ONE FANTASTIC RIDE.

JACK

Oww! My ears. You don't have to yell. I can hear you pal-o-mine. Do I know you?

D'OGG howls.

D'OGG

Greetings Jack! I am D'ogg, your faithful guide.

D'OGG bows.

D'OGG (cont'd)

Sorry, but vibrational sounds tune you after the cleansing in The Wheel.

JACK

You are my...Dee-awg?

D'OGG

You naughty boy. I have been sniffing high and low for you. You have been giving me the royal run-around. No harm done it seems. Here you are, safe and sound.

JACK

I'm supposed to know you?

D'OGG

It is my distinct honor to be your personal guide as a representative of the Deity of the Gilded Guides. And a rewarding alliance it has been to the benefit of us both. I am sure you will be overjoyed to hear this ride has...

JACK

This is a joke, right? I'm still dreaming.

D'OGG

Be patient, my friend. Your vibration is still tuning. All will be revealed. Are we ready to jump through The Hoop to Eldorado?

JACK

This is the strangest dream I've ever had.

D'OGG

You are discombobulated from the shock of crossing and from your stay in The Wheel of Being, where everything goes, everything returns.

JACK

Listen Dee, or whatever your name is...

D'OGG

Ah, you are coming around. You are sensing my pet name.

JACK

Pet name?

D'OGG

Many in Eldorado call me Dee. As I revealed, I am your guide and have been for many Games. And what a wild ride this one has been, my friend! I look forward to being your guide in the next one. Shall we start now to plan strategy for your next adventure? How about catching a string to the tenth dimension? Or what about Zabar in the Trion Galaxy?

D'OGG salutes Jack.

D'OGG CONT.

I would consider it an honor to continue working with you on fine-tuning the cause of any effect. In fact, the Architects of the Ascension Committee are offering the prize of a bonus round for the discovery of any new cause and I just know that together we can win this.

CLAUDIA

Your sorrow is reflected in this five of cups. A figure draped in black is consumed by grief. Cups are overturned, but the figure does not see the two cups still upright. This could indicate an inheritance after a death.

DIANE

Alan controls the cash flow and the IRS took the rest. I got nothing from Jack's estate.

JACK

Architects and the Trion Galaxy? You lost me pal. Do you know why my sister can't hear me?

D'OGG & ANGELIC VOICES

OOOOOHHHHHMMMMM!

Beat.

JACK

My plane crashed! (Beat) My plane crashed?

D'OGG

Going too fast?

JACK

My plane crashed. Oh my god, I'm dead!

D'OGG howls.

D'OGG

Jack, you are alive. You are in the Other Life.

CIAUDIA

Would you excuse me a minute. I may have left water on the stove. Why don't you study the images on the cards and concentrate on your questions.

CLAUDIA exits. DIANE picks up the cards, and haphazardly throws them around.

JACK

And I'm supposed to know you?

D'OGG

That one song we wrote, about the night and the wind. It did well, did it not?

JACK

That was you?

JACK strums his guitar. During the song DIANE stops looking at the cards, as if she hears something.

JACK (cont'd)

(Sings)

1. WHEN YOU CAN'T STOP
CRYIN' IN THE NIGHT,
CLOSE YOUR EYES
& THINK OF ME.
IN YOUR DARKEST HOUR,
I WILL SEND,
A MELODY,
CARRIED BY THE WIND.

2. TRUST IN ME
I'LL NEVER LET YOU DOWN,
EVEN WHEN YOUR
POOR HEART BREAKS.

JACK (cont'd)

LISTEN FOR THE MUSIC
I WILL SEND,
A MELODY,

CARRIED BY THE WIND.

(BRIDGE)

HERE IS MY PROMISE,
ON THIS YOU CAN DEPEND.
A LOVE LIKE OURS
WILL NEVER EVER END.

DIANE gets up and walks around. JACK walks with her.

3. WALK WITH ME
I'LL WHISPER IN YOUR EAR,
A SECRET ONLY
YOU & I WILL KNOW.
AND ANYTIME YOU NEED IT
I WILL SEND,
A MELODY,
CARRIED BY THE WIND.

CLAUDIA enters and sits at the table.

DIANE

Did you hear that?

CLAUDIA

What dear?

DIANE

I thought I heard Jack singing.

CLAUDIA

Wonderful! That must mean he is hovering around. Do you have any questions about the cards before we get started?

DIANE sits down at the table. She and CLAUDIA huddle around the cards.

D'OGG

One of our better collaborations.

JACK

Yes, it was.

D'OGG

The Bonus Tokens from the COSMOS for that song put us over the top.

D'OGG holds up a tether.

JACK

If you say so.

JACK puts guitar down.

D'OGG

Do you recall that time you were scuba diving, and got separated from your dive buddy in a cave?

JACK

Yes, I nearly drowned. (Beat) That was you?

D'OGG bows.

JACK (cont'd)

I remember having the strangest sensation that some arm guided me to the entrance of that cave.

D'OGG

You're welcome. It has not been easy keeping your Meat Body all in one piece the way you fling yourself around in those metal boxes you call cars and planes and boats and spaceships. What a brilliant idea. Throwing carbon meat bodies into the vacuum of space.

JACK

But why did I have to die now? I was havin' such a good time.

D'OGG

Sorry. I was sent on assignment to the planet Kibble. An entire race of Foobars needed help getting out of a swamp.

JACK

You saved Foobars instead of me?

D'OGG

Jack, an entire race! The last of its kind. The Divinity at the Center specifically ordered me, and that's a Trump Card.

JACK

It still sucks. Aren't there any other guides?

D'OGG

I'm crushed. I can understand your disappointment, but I don't make the rules. All complaints must be submitted in triplicate to the Divinity at the Center, the Hall of Ten Architects, and The COSMOS.

JACK

COSMOS? Cosmos. At least that's a word I recognize.

THE HOOP appears. The Hoop can be anything from a hoola-hoop to an electric device.

D'OGG

Council Of Soul Management Oversight. After you get an Extasie (pronounced EX'-stasie) re-charge, all will be remembered. Come. We must jump through The Hoop together and collect our Game Tokens. I cannot drag you through, you know, you must come willingly. Those are the rules. Your reserves won't last long in this No Man's Land, so Eldorado here we come!

D'OGG walks up to The Hoop.

JACK hovers around Diane.

JACK

I can't go yet.

D'OGG

Come Jack, we must go now! Your mother and father and grandmother are all waiting to greet you when we arrive.

JACK

Mom and Dad? And Grandma? I can't wait to see them.

D'OGG

And away we go...

JACK

Hold on.

D'OGG

If you lose all Extasie you might get sucked into the nether regions of No Man's Land.

JACK

What's the big deal? Aren't you here to save me?

D'OGG

Even a talented guide such as myself might have trouble sniffing you out of one of those desolate places in No Man's Land. It's only because of your excellent reserves of Extasie from a life lived in love that you can maneuver at all without returning directly to Eldorado. Besides, if you lose all your Extasie, we, I mean, you, lose all your Tokens.

JACK hovers around Diane.

JACK

But I have some unfinished business.

D'OGG

Loved ones left behind in grief. Isn't that your sister?

JACK

Yes, Diane. She seems almost suicidal. I can't let her marry Alan. Mom and Dad wouldn't want me to leave her like this.

The Hoop dissipates.

D'OGG

What a bother. (Aside) We must get to Eldorado to collect our Tokens.

JACK

Why is she here? And who is she with?

D'OGG walks over to Claudia.

D'OGG

My dearest Claudia. I've yet to meet another Meat Body who can so easily receive my essence.

CLAUDIA

Did you bring a personal item of Jack's? I think I mentioned it in our phone conversation. It can help in making contact.

DIANE pulls a colorful shirt out of her purse and places it on the table.

DIANE

Here is a shirt of his.

CLAUDIA

Ah yes, this will do.

CLAUDIA touches the shirt and meditates.

JACK

My lucky shirt. I love that shirt.

D'OGG

Celebrity is no guarantee of taste.

JACK

Look at what you wear.

D'OGG

Tis the uniform of a Deity of the Gilded Guides I wear, and a uniform I wear with pride. I've earned every tether.

D'OGG points to a tether.

D'OGG (cont'd)

The Chaos Engineers personally awarded me this one for guiding an unusual group of Meat Bodies to safety here on Earth. Did you forget?

JACK

I guess so.

D'OGG

I'm so glad you asked. This was no ordinary group of Meat Bodies. This tribe had several males and females with brains that exhibited an extraordinary amount of individuation and intelligence. It happens sometimes, a leap in consciousness called...

JACK

Evolution.

D'OGG

ARRFFF! I hate it when someone finishes my sentence. No Mr. Famous-All-Over-Gaia-Tacky-Shirt. I was referring to a mutation. A mutation due to hygiene or rather their diet, specifically some wacky mind-enhancing grog they had made by happenstance from an unusual desert plant introduced to them by me, strategically placed by a rather striking burning bush. Burning bushes always get the party started. Zapped the brain, that's what it did. The Geneticists in the Hall of Biology were impressed. This tribe's offspring and their escapades continue to generate enough chaotic life experiences to fill several worlds without any help from Lucifer or his minions. The Chaos Engineers were very pleased with me, and awarded me the (D'OGG holds up a tether) Honorem ad Infinitum! And you're welcome!

DIANE

(To Claudia)

Are you getting anything?

JACK turns to Diane.

CLAUDIA

Be patient, my dear. Focus on your brother.

DIANE

(Aside)

Oh, brother!

CLAUDIA

What did you say dear?

DIANE

I said, oh, brother, wherefore art thou?

JACK

I'm right here, Diane.

CLAUDIA

Good, dear. Stay focused.

DIANE rolls her eyes.

JACK

Diane, I'm right here!

D'OGG

Some people just do not appreciate my cleverness....

JACK turns back to D'ogg.

JACK

I'm impressed. How do I get a message to Diane?

D'OGG

Do you think your Grammy and Oscar Prizes are better than an award recognized throughout the entire Universe?

JACK

I said I was impressed. Can we get back to the present? I need to help Diane find my will, and stop this marriage between her and Alan.

D'OGG

Your tuning is not complete, otherwise you would know there is no present, past or future where we are.

JACK

I give up. Where are we?

D'OGG

No Man's Land. A timeless dimension within and around a planet that hosts incarnated personalities that have ascended, or as Meat Bodies say, "Died."

JACK

No Man's Land? Great.

D'OGG

Our Game host, and in this case the very lovely Gaia, is charged with properties that sponsor disembodied personalities with strong thoughts to create non-biological, sub-atomic worlds.

JACK

Sub-atomic worlds?

D'OGG

A place where ethereal beings or souls who have crossed over without Extasie wander around in shells of former thoughts, sometimes creating elaborate cities out of their stored memories, whole imaginary worlds.

JACK

A place not real?

D'OGG

Think of it as a holding tank for the confused, or a time-out penalty...souls booted out of The Galaxy Game.

JACK

How do I know you are real?

D'OGG

Real is when new events continue to unfold, such as is happening now, and new ideas, new insights, new possibilities.

D'OGG places a tether on Jack's arm.

D'OGG (cont'd)

New feelings.

JACK reacts pleasurably to D'OGG's orgasmic touch.
D'OGG removes tether.

D'OGG (cont'd)

Real enough for you?

JACK

(Crackly)

Yes.

D'OGG

But if we don't jump out of here your Extasie reserves will run out and your personality, you Jack Cody, could get lost in your own past memories and be stuck, replaying the events of your former Game over, and over, and over again, and you would lose all the Game Tokens you've earned. (Aside) And mine.

JACK

You're talking about a ghost.

D'OGG

Yes, a ghost.

DIANE

(To Claudia)

Madame Claudia, how much longer?

JACK turns to Diane.

CLAUDIA

Be patient, dear. I feel we're almost ready. I'm sensing activity all around.

DIANE

(Aside)

I'll say, dollars flying around the room. (Louder) Jack, if you really are here please give me a sign. I'm desperate here!

CLAUDIA

Good, dear. Stay in that thought.

DIANE rolls her eyes

JACK

Dee, I'm here because Diane needs me. Right? She's calling on me to help her. Right?

D'OGG

Oh, I suppose.

JACK

I have to do something. You heard her, she's desperate. What if she kills herself? I couldn't live with that. Or be dead with that, or whatever.

D'OGG

(Aside) If only the girl would deal with her own problems and let the dead die in peace. If only I could drag him through The Hoop. (To Jack) Typical Jack. Only cares about others. Of course, your unselfish behavior is one of your more noble attributes. (Aside) And earns us extra Tokens.

(To Jack) But if you fade into a ghost you will be of no use to anyone, and that will be the end of your rising star in the Universe. End of story. Over and out. Sayonara. Adios. Namasté. Do svidanja. Sctfxl.

JACK

Sctfxl?

D'OGG

Zabarian. It means good-bye. (Beat) Jack, you don't want to lose all the Game Tokens we, ahem, you have earned on Gaia. Ascension is not always guaranteed, but after this spectacular ride...let's just say there is more than enough to ascend to the next level, and start at the top of your Game anywhere you go next. Congratulations, Jack Cody, Adept 1st Class.

D'OGG nudges Jack.

D'OGG (cont'd)

Now let's jump through The Hoop to Eldorado.

JACK backs away.

JACK

What Game tokens? All I have is this guitar.

D'OGG

You have earned a Game Token for every good deed and unselfish act completed in your Meat Body. The records are kept in Eldorado, but you must complete your Game by jumping through The Hoop and cashing in your Tokens with the Ascension Cashier. We are in the final stretch. We can't quit now, my friend.

JACK

Dee, that's great, I like winning at games, but...

D'OGG

Jack, maybe I haven't made myself clear. This is not just any game I'm talking about, this is The Game. The Galaxy Game. The raison d'être. The beneficent Divinity at the Center has created all life to play The Game. If you're not playing The Game, you're out. Kaput. Kapeesh?

JACK

I hear you, but Game or no Game, I'm not leaving my little sis like this. I haven't always been there for Diane, and now she's all alone, and she's in trouble. I won't leave her like this. I just won't.

D'OGG

Stubborn, but endearing.

JACK

Why don't we go back in time or fast forward to see what happens? Maybe there has been some big mix-up. Maybe I heard her wrong.

D'OGG

My friend, freewill is in play, and there is no way to view the future because the future is unknown. Those are the rules of a time-line Galaxy Game. But we can view past events. Watch this.

D'OGG claps tethers. Lights flash. Time Warp Sounds.
CLAUDIA and DIANE rewind their actions.

CLAUDIA

Did you bring a personal item of Jack's? I think I mentioned it in our phone conversation. It can help in making contact.

DIANE pulls a colorful shirt out of her purse.

DIANE

Here is a shirt of his.

CLAUDIA takes the shirt and places it on the table.

CLAUDIA

Ah yes, this will do.

D'OGG claps appendages. CLAUDIA and DIANE resume. JACK scratches his head.

D'OGG

Once The Record has been made, it can be recalled.

JACK

Then take me to the time right before I took off in my plane and let me stop the crash!

D'OGG

I'm sorry Jack. We only viewed a picture of the past, an image from the Memory Film Library. Time Lines can't be changed.

JACK

So time travel isn't possible?

D'OGG

Yet another myth seeded by the Agents of that Dervilish Deity Lucifer to confuse and mislead. Those Cretans will stop at nothing to get rid of my sensuous Meat Bodies, and win The Galaxy Game.

JACK

Meat Body? What's a Meat Body?

D'OGG

You are. At least, you were. I refer to your former body that is fragile and eventually rots. A flesh suit that requires an atmosphere of 77% Nitrogen, 21% Oxygen with traces of Argon, Carbon Dioxide, and H₂O.

D'OGG imitates Elvis.

D'OGG (cont'd)

Got a hank o' hair, and a piece o' bone, and made a walkin', talkin', Honeycomb.

JACK

There's no way to change the past?

D'OGG

As you will remember, after we get your Extasie recharged in Eldorado, time travel would allow Meat Bodies a way to alter the choices they've made, spoiling all the fun. Freewill Jack, a rule of The Game.

JACK

I guess I knew that.

D'OGG pets Jack.

D'OGG

Don't worry about it. It's not easy burning off karma in The Wheel. All will be made clear when we get to Eldorado.

CLAUDIA

Diane, try to crystallize your thoughts. What do you want to say to Jack?

DIANE

It's just...I just.

DIANE cries, but composes herself.

DIANE (cont'd)

I just wish I could talk to him one last time, you know. I didn't get to say goodbye...

DIANE blows her nose. Squeaky door. DIANE jumps.

DIANE (cont'd)

Did you hear that?

CLAUDIA looks to the kitchen, yet quickly turns back to pat Diane on the shoulder.

CLAUDIA

It's nothing, dear. These old pre-war buildings creak all the time.

DIANE

Really? Not another ghost or Spirit or...or Mother Theresa?

CLAUDIA

No, I'm fairly certain it's not Mother Theresa.

D'OGG

Ah, Mother Theresa. Now that woman was a cash cow. She and her guide ascended two entire levels, just from the Bonus Tokens of one incarnation. Lucky dog.

CLAUDIA

Have some tea, Diane. I promise it will help.

DIANE sips the tea. Calms down.

D'OGG

I sense her pain. (Aside) Silly girl. I need Jack to forget about her problems.

JACK

Poor Diane. Sometimes I thought she hated me. Most of the time I was too busy working to think about it much. Now I don't know. Maybe I could have been a better brother.

D'OGG

You are a good man Jack. All Meat Bodies are guilty of some denial. It goes with the breed.

JACK

No. I should've handled some things better. Especially with my little sister. When she was little, she looked up to me, but over the years we've had a lot of fights. We both can be a little stubborn. Since our parents died we've been getting along better. I got her a job with my publicist on tour dates. But look at her. Poor sis. She's miserable.

D'OGG

(Sings)

Help her make it through the night. (Speaks) Catchy don't you think?

JACK

Too late Dee. Already a hit song.

D'OGG

Arrff!

CLAUDIA

Now we will begin.

CLAUDIA pulls the Crystal Ball closer and stares into it. D'OGG hovers around CLAUDIA.

D'OGG

I visit this beauty often. She calls me her poet. I find her a bit phoney, but entertaining. The gift of communicating with Spirit does not necessarily guarantee impeccable scruples, nor is her Channel 100% accurate, but her soul...

D'OGG gestures to Claudia's breast.

D'OGG (cont'd)

...is full, overflowing with love. Sometimes Deity can overlook a flaw for a vision of loveliness. Oh, how I write verses about this one. Your exotic beauty / so red and juicy / in sliding down your slope / my fountain fills with hope. Not bad, eh?

JACK

Don't give up your day job.

D'OGG

Bah! Just because millions of souls sing your songs, you think you're an expert.

JACK

I try to listen to my heart, that's all. Hey, did I stumble on some universal truth, like you need me as much as I need you? To write songs anyway.

D'OGG pouts.

D'OGG

I suppose. But don't get a big head about it.

CLAUDIA

Stay very focused on your questions.

DIANE

I need to know if Alan had anything to do with Jack's plane crash, and what happened to his will?

JACK

What happened to my will?

D'OGG

Your sister is very skinny.

JACK

What's wrong with skinny?

D'OGG

Nothing, I suppose. I prefer a little meat on a woman, especially when I'm in my man suit.

CLAUDIA

Henry John Christoph the Third! Enter my body and speak!

JACK

How do I do that?

D'OGG

Pay close attention to my technique.

Lightening. Lights down. DIANE screams.

Don Giovanni Overture intro chords.

Lights fade up.

PREACHER BOB stands behind Claudia and holds a large Bible.

CLAUDIA

My dear, calm yourself. It was just the storm.

DIANE

Oh.

CLAUDIA

Let's regroup and try again.

CLAUDIA stares into Crystal Ball. DIANE nods her head: sleepy.

D'OGG

Someone is trying to cut in line and crash our party. The nerve!

JACK

(To D'ogg)

Hey, I know that man.

JACK walks over to Preacher. D'OGG follows.

JACK (cont'd)

Preacher Bob?

PREACHER turns to look at Jack. Extends his hand.

PREACHER BOB

Glad to see you again, son.

JACK doesn't shake his hand.

JACK

Really! You are?

PREACHER retracts his hand.

PREACHER BOB

You don't look like one of my flock. Do I know you?

JACK

Yes, you do Preacher Bob. You and your ministry tried to boycott my peace concert. Branded me a traitor to my country for protesting war.

PREACHER backs away.

PREACHER BOB

Now I remember you. You're one of them Hollyweirdo liberals, ain't cha?

JACK

Glad to see you too, Preacher.

JACK steps up to Preacher.

JACK (cont'd)

How does a man of God condone a war on innocent women and children?

PREACHER BOB

Listen here boy, you can't blame our leaders for tryin' to keep our people safe. If the heathen had only paid attention to my powerful message, so clearly stated in my last sermon, "My God Is Your God, And They're Both Angry," they could have saved themselves from our bombs and the hell-fire of damnation. End of discussion.

PREACHER walks away from Jack.

PREACHER BOB (cont'd)

I need to get a message to my wife. The ninny thinks her fried chicken and gravy at the Sunday dinner killed me, but she wasn't in the room when our only daughter announced she's marrying a damned heathen boy. The wife was in the kitchen getting me some more biscuits--those flaky ones I love--when this offspring of my loins shocked me into an early grave. My wife must stop that marriage! I may be dead, but I'm not done. No daughter of mine is marrying a lazy son of a bitch heathen who works part time at a Dunkin' Donuts for Christ sakes, not even a Krispy Kreme.

PREACHER studies Diane. DIANE is nodding out.

JACK

What's wrong with Diane?

D'OGG

Seems a little sleepy, doesn't she?

PREACHER points at Diane.

PREACHER BOB

This little gal's got somethin' nasty hangin' off of her. Must be in cahoots with the Devil.

PREACHER walks over to study Claudia.

JACK inspects Diane.

JACK

Hey Dee, the old coot is right. What is that?

JACK points to Diane. A black CRAB THINGY expands around her waist. D'OGG walks over to sniff it.

D'OGG

Ah, the poor girl has some elemental attached to her subtle body. It smells like one of those crabs that sucks the life out of a person. They are attracted to sensitive people who are starved for love.

JACK

Poor Diane.

JACK strokes Diane's hair.

JACK (cont'd)

I wonder why no one can find my will? And why is she marrying Alan?

PREACHER hovers around Claudia.

PREACHER BOB

(Grabs his balls)

Now this attractive communiqué to the living is more my style. I'd like to dip my Dixie stick in her meat pie.

CLAUDIA takes Diane's hand.

CLAUDIA

Henry John Christoph the Third! Enter my body and speak!

PREACHER tries to jump into Claudia, but fails.

D'OGG

What a buffoon!

JACK

Hey, she's asking for me, not him.

CLAUDIA

I sense a struggle happening all around. I feel a Spirit trying to enter. Who is here to speak to Diane? Is that you Jack?

Crystal Ball flashes. Thunder. PREACHER BOB gets under Claudia's chair.

D'OGG

This is one of those tortured souls stuck in No Man's Land after crossing over.

JACK

So, he's a ghost?

D'OGG

Yes. He has created a fantasy world made out of his Meat Body's last tangible thoughts. This man is still preaching his dribble.

Others are forever building Taj Mahals, or playing slot machines, or reading books in a library. Pathetic. The angel Michael may eventually sweep him up with the other fools.

JACK

But he sees us. Why doesn't he know he's stuck?

D'OGG

No Extasie. No Deity of the Gilded Guides can tune him. Think of crossing over as shedding an overcoat. The coat is off, but his heartless personality remains.

CLAUDIA is clearly not herself. Her expression is painful. Her voice is raspy. DIANE struggles to stay awake, but she notices the change in Claudia and releases her hand.

DIANE

Madame Claudia, are you all right?

CLAUDIA/PREACHER

My God is an angry God!

DIANE

Madame Claudia? Jack? Is that you? I can't make out what you are saying.

CLAUDIA/PREACHER

Tell my wife not to let our daughter marry that heathen. Don't marry him!

DIANE

I'm sorry Jack, I don't understand. Don't marry Alan? Alan is a heathen? Oh Jack, did Alan sabotage your plane?

CLAUDIA/PREACHER

A daughter should obey her father's will!

DIANE

Will? What happened to your will? I remember something about you making a new one to include Aunt Tilly after Mom and Dad died, but I can't find it. The only one I can find is the one from before your last divorce.

JACK

My lawyer should have a copy. I was planning to give Diane a key to a safety deposit box with a copy of my new will at our dinner at Anton's. So much for that.

DIANE

The probate court is selling off the ranch, the three condos, your cars, the Lear jet, everything. Without a will the Internal Revenue Service will take half of all that money, and the rest will be tied up in litigation.

JACK

The Internal Revenue Service is getting my money? That money was supposed to plant trees and buy more land for my nature conservancy!

CLAUDIA/PREACHER

I will never give up the fight.

DIANE

Easy for you to say. How can I fight? Alan controls all the bank accounts, and I don't have enough money to hire a lawyer to fight him. I suspect he's funneled money into off-shore accounts. I wish you'd come back here and fix this mess.

CLAUDIA/PREACHER

(Gurgling Sound)

Ahhh.

DIANE

And there's no money to keep Aunt Tilly in assisted living. I had to go back to Jackson to get an apartment with her, or she would've been sent to one of those horrible nursing homes.

JACK

No money? What's she talking about? There was at least a hundred million in my estate the last time I looked. I had a will. They threw Aunt Tilly out of her home?

CLAUDIA/PREACHER

No nuptials...

DIANE

Pre-nuptials? Alan made me sign a pre-nuptial or there's no deal. He controls all the song publishing money, the mechanical sales, the licensing, royalties, everything.

CLAUDIA/PREACHER

Bum...work.

DIANE

Work? I can't find a job. Alan has probably told everyone lies about me. If I don't marry him, Aunt Tilly and I will be on the street! I just don't know what else to do.

CLAUDIA/PREACHER

Ahh.

DIANE

Jack, I'm sorry about all the fights we've had over the years. I miss you so much! (Beat)
Oh, this is ridiculous.

CLAUDIA's body jerks suddenly.

CLAUDIA/PREACHER

(Spitting)

Do not let our daughter marry that devil worshipper.

DIANE

Excuse me?

CLAUDIA jerks violently. PREACHER BOB rolls out from under the chair, flails around, and tries to jump back into Claudia. CLAUDIA contorts.

CLAUDIA/PREACHER

Hell-No-You-Don't-Tell-My-Wife-Get-Out-Of-Me-You-Moron!

PREACHER BOB falls flat, flinging his Bible.

CLAUDIA composes herself. Her face and voice return to normal.

D'OGG doubles over laughing. JACK is lost in thought.

CLAUDIA

Oh my, you must forgive the Preacher. He is quite persistent.

DIANE

Who?

CLAUDIA

I'm sorry, but some souls seem very stuck. It's as if they are wandering around in a No Man's Land. This poor soul has been bothering me ever since I did a session with his wife. A Preacher of some sorts. The wife was feeling guilty. She thought her fried chicken had killed him. Very nervous lady. Let me make sure the room is cleared.

CLAUDIA closes her eyes. DIANE nods and then she jerks awake.

DIANE

I don't know why I'm so tired.

D'OGG walks over and looks down at the Preacher.

D'OGG

So Preacher Bob, still damning everyone to your hell?

PREACHER gets up. He panics and leaps to pick up his Bible. He holds it between him and D'OGG, as a shield.

PREACHER BOB

Boy! I don't know what game ya'll are playin' with this devilish dog get-up, but I think you should know that while you're singin' your songs about peace and love, the heathens are screwin' our daughters and tryin' to take over the whole friggin' planet.

PREACHER BOB spins around, holding his Bible out in front of him. JACK strides over to the Preacher.

JACK

Preacher, it's men like you that give religion a bad name.

D'OGG

It's men like Preacher Boob that keep the Chaos Engineers happy.

PREACHER BOB

(To D'ogg)

Get thee behind me Satan!

PREACHER hugs his Bible.

JACK

Preacher, wake up. You are stuck in No Man's Land.

PREACHER BOB

(To Jack)

Boy, the Devil is playin' tricks on us. When will you Hollyweirdos ever learn? Satan and his e-e-evildoers are everywhere. Come away from that dog!

D'OGG

Jack, save your energy.

(To Preacher)

In case you haven't noticed, you are out of The Game you puffed up bag of wind. Your Extasie is gone. You have faded into your last horrible thought. Look at you, a pathetic shell of your former self. Our beloved Michael might recycle you, but left up to me, I'd make you scrub the smelly bins at the Hall of Biology for several eons before letting you back in The Game.

PREACHER BOB

(To Jack)

My son. You are in grave danger. God is merciful, but he is angry. Repent of your sins before it's too late.

Lights flash off and on. Thunder. Lightening. Don Giovanni Chords.

D'OGG stands very tall center stage with tethers outstretched.

D'OGG & ANGELIC VOICES

PRIMO BUFFO DI MEZZO CARATTERE. PRIMO BUFFO DI MEZZO CARATTERE.

PREACHER disappears.

JACK

Fan-tas-tic!

D'OGG shakes his tethers.

D'OGG

There, I feel much better. With that messy myth-monger out of the way, we can get back to business. Maybe Michael in his beneficence will sweep him up later.

JACK

Michael?

D'OGG

Michael, one of the Archangel Referees. He is the one full of grace and all that redemption stuff. Not me. I'm a realist.

JACK

Where'd the Preacher go?

D'OGG

Back to the nether regions of No Man's Land. Good riddance.

DIANE passes out on the table. JACK runs to her.

JACK

Diane?

CLAUDIA opens her eyes.

CLAUDIA

You can come out now, Alan!

ALAN vigorously enters through the off-stage kitchen door. His grooming and accessories match his expensive business suit. When excited, he speaks with a slight stutter and looks in the mirror at every opportunity to check his image.

ALAN

I thought she'd never pass out.

CLAUDIA

I heard you come in.

JACK

Alan? They drugged Diane?

ALAN walks over and kisses Claudia on the cheek.

ALAN

Darling, sorry I'm late. You should have your handy man fix that squeaky service door. Quite a show you put on out here. I peeked through the crack.

CLAUDIA

Sweetheart, did you bring the documents?

ALAN pulls a packet from his inner jacket pocket, and hands it to Claudia.

ALAN

Here is a copy of your new Trust. I filed it myself at the courthouse this morning. This penthouse, the condo in Boca, and the ranch in Texas have all been transferred into it. I (clears throat) spoke to the auditor and he has agreed to close your file. Your husband's problems with the Internal Revenue Service will not be a problem for you anymore.

CLAUDIA inspects the papers inside.

CLAUDIA

My darling Henrí, may he rot in jail in peace.

ALAN

And now, for your part, you must convince Diane it's in her best interest to marry me sooner than later, and stop all this blasted waffling.

CLAUDIA

Sweetheart? Why does Diane think you sabotaged the plane her brother was flying?

ALAN

I don't know. Delusional? Grief-stricken, I guess. She'll come around.

CLAUDIA

I don't mind trying to beat the system when it comes to money, but I don't fool around with murder. There is an Afterlife, you know, and the Divinity frowns on murder. I find you charming, but I don't like murderers.

ALAN

I didn't kill Jack. His plane crashed. It was an unfortunate accident.

CLAUDIA

And what happened to his will?

ALAN

I saw an opportunity. Why not? I've worked hard to build up this business. Jack Cody Incorporated is my brain-child. It was my shrewd business sense that made the billions, not his goofy songs.

CLAUDIA

Trashing a Soul who has crossed over is not attractive. Besides, I love his songs, especially the ones about Nature.

ALAN

Yes, of course. But Jack never understood business. I took care of all the dirty work, which allowed him to be Peter Pan to the world. And then he wanted to get rid of me? Me! Who did he think he was to fire me!? Luckily, the asshole died before he actually did it. But then he names Diane executor of the estate and leaves her in charge of everything? She's a god-damn actress. Oh, excuse me, I mean publicist. She's really a bad actress who couldn't act her way out of Cody, Wyoming, let alone handle company finances or chair a board meeting.

CLAUDIA

Really Alan, she can't be all that...

ALAN

She's not a star, is she? And neither was her folk singer brother until I came along. I'm the one who made Jack Cody a star! Songs just don't appear in the media without a lot of money, and the right people behind them. I'm one of those people! Why should he care what my cut was!? I had every right to destroy his stupid will.

JACK

(Points at Alan)

You jerk! You were the manager of a record store when I met you pal-o-mine!

CLAUDIA

Alan, I am not here to judge you. Calm down.

ALAN

I'm sorry, darling. Please forgive me. Since Jack's plane crash I have been under tremendous strain and scrutiny. You have no idea what it's been like dealing with Diane. After we're married, things will calm down.

CLAUDIA

Destroying a will is against the law Alan.

ALAN

Is that so?

(Leans into Claudia's ear)

I'll let you in on a little secret, darling, so is putting properties in a Trust after an IRS audit has been initiated. But no one need ever know, my love. We can keep our little secrets to ourselves, can't we?

CLAUDIA

I had no idea you were creating an illegal Trust. And I agreed to gently persuade Diane of your worth, not trick her into marrying her tormentor.

ALAN

Darling please, illegal is such a harsh word. You hurt me. Let's call it Creative Asset Protection. Laws, after all, are only words on the page, not the reality on the street. Money is all that matters to certain lawyers and judges and...auditors. (Beat) And tormentor? I'm really shocked! I have feelings for Diane. Strong feelings. Not like the ones I have for you. Trust me, it's better for everyone this way. Diane doesn't know anything about handling money. She would run the business into the ground within a year. This way, we all get what we want. Diane gets taken care of. You, you get what's rightfully yours, and I continue being the CEO of a successful business.

CLAUDIA

You forgot, you get Diane. Of course, she could make your life miserable. She's very depressed.

ALAN

Yes, well, it may be difficult for awhile, but I think she will eventually see things my way. Give her some time. Her brother just died for heaven sakes. No parents alive. Once she's settled into domestic life, she'll come around. Maybe a kid would keep her busy. I'm certainly willing to give it a go. I already have a son, Alan Jr.

I've always wanted a daughter. Daddy's little girl. Has a nice ring to it, don't you think? Maybe she'd even grow up to be a famous singer like her uncle.

JACK gets in Alan's face.

JACK

I should have fired you a long time ago. If only I wasn't dead, I'd, I'd show you a thing or two.

D'OGG

He's shaking in his Testonis. Don't waste your energy, Jack. Alan will regret his actions...maybe...eventually. Or he will join the other lost souls in No Man's Land.

CLAUDIA

Why do you have to marry her?

ALAN

Don't you see darling, it's brilliant. I can release a special compilation of Jack Cody love songs in honor of our wedding with special first edition signed photographs of the ceremony.

ALAN (cont'd)

With Love, From Alan Thane and Diane Cody. The Jack Cody fans will lap it up. Since Peter Pan went and got himself killed, I have to make up his touring money from somewhere. I need this marriage to happen now to meet the packaging deadline for a Christmas release.

CLAUDIA

He has that many fans?

ALAN

Who in their right mind would miss the opportunity to sell a guaranteed 20 million units worldwide? Oh, damn. I need to remind my secretary to pick up a ring on 47th Street before we leave tonight. Those Hasidics have the best deals.

CLAUDIA

(sarcastic)

Touching.

ALAN walks over to touch Diane's hair.

CLAUDIA (cont'd)

You will take good care of Diane, won't you?

ALAN

She'll have plenty.

CLAUDIA

Is it all about money, Alan?

ALAN

Mostly, but I admit I like the idea of being married to Jack Cody's sister. (Sarcastic) I mean, Jack was like the brother I never had. (Beat) And, I can also keep an eye on her in case she finds some lawyer who thinks he can sue me for something.

ALAN takes Diane's limp hand.

ALAN (cont'd)

Do you drug all your clients, darling?

CLAUDIA

Certainly not. (Beat) You have the hots for her, don't you?

ALAN leans into Diane's face.

ALAN

Always thought you were too good for me. But you need me now, don't you?

ALAN drops Diane's hand.

ALAN (cont'd)

She's a little skinny, but I'd throw her a bone. Now don't be jealous, my love.

CLAUDIA

Jealous? Ha! Don't count on it. I feel sorry for the poor thing. I doubt she will let you touch her. She's still in love with someone named Sam.

ALAN

Sam? That non-entity who thinks he's a songwriter? He's just some nebbish who was only using Diane to get to Jack.

CLAUDIA

Regardless, she's not in love with you, Alan.

ALAN

Love? What is love anyway, over-rated and over-used. She'll do whatever I want.

ALAN leans over and kisses Claudia's neck.

ALAN (cont'd)

Now lust. That I understand. You, my darling, drive me into a frenzy of desire.

CLAUDIA

I'm very flattered Alan. (Beat) And you will take care of Aunt Tilly?

Alan stops kissing.

ALAN

Yes, of course. But I don't know why a nursing home isn't good enough. The old bag is nuttier than a fruitcake. Oh, I have the picture.

ALAN pulls a picture out of his pocket.

ALAN (cont'd)

Here is what Diane's dead mother looked like.

CLAUDIA inspects the picture.

CLAUDIA

Such a lovely woman.

ALAN

Whatever. I think during the séance you should have the mother say things like, "Alan is the best person to take care of you and Aunt Tilly," and...

ALAN and CLAUDIA huddle.

JACK stumbles and D'OGG nabs him.

JACK

Why didn't I fire Alan a long time ago? I suspected his double dealings, but I didn't want to face it. Now look at this mess.

D'OGG

You may not have enough reserves of Extasie to do anything about it.

JACK

Then let's go to Eldorado and come back to help Diane.

D'OGG

Sorry, Jack. The time-line for Diane is still in play. Her Game will be played out before we can return.

JACK

But what if she lives out this miserable life, and dies of a broken heart? Does she have a Guide to help her to Eldorado?

D'OGG

Extasie must fill her being, like yours was, and that, most likely, will not happen with this Crab attached to her subtle body. Thus, she will not attract a Guide and the odds are she will wander off into No Man's Land. I'm sorry Jack.

JACK

Ecstasy again. In my world, Ecstasy is some nasty drug.

D'OGG

No, no, no, no. EX-tasie is the fuel, the juice, the stickum, the gunk, the goo, the guts of the universe. Without Extasie there would be no Galaxy Game. The R-O-T-F call Extasie the fuel of all vibrational existence.

JACK

R-O-T-F?

D'OGG

Regulators of the Flow. Their motto is, "So soul into the soul may flow." Now that the sensors of your Meat Body are no longer collecting the elixir, your only source of Extasie is in Eldorado. We must jump through The Hoop to get it.

JACK

I'm not leaving until I stop Alan.

JACK sits and holds his head.

D'OGG

Jack, you're weakening. Your Extasie is running low.

JACK picks up his guitar and starts to strum chords to Ballad of the Wheel. He perks up.

JACK

Music will get me through this. It always has before.

D'OGG

Yes, but music will not replenish your Extasie in No Man's Land.

JACK

Maybe not, but that still won't stop me from trying to save my sister. I've always found strength in my music. I'll just pretend this is my first guitar and Alan is the bully that was beating me up in the sixth grade. When I played that guitar that bully left me alone. Hey, even the girls liked me better.

D'OGG bear hugs Jack.

D'OGG

And I like you too!

They both fall over.

JACK

Lucky me.

ALAN

If Diane believes her mother wants our marriage, she will stop all this nonsense.

CLAUDIA

She will be putty in your hands.

ALAN lifts up CLAUDIA's hand, kisses it, and continues to cradle it.

JACK puts guitar down and jumps up, angrily walking around. D'OGG follows on all fours.

ALAN

Good. But what I really want in my hands, Claudia, is your gorgeous, beautiful body. I will forever be grateful to that nuisance Leonard.

CLAUDIA

(Laughing)

Leonard, a nuisance? It was Leonard who introduced us.

ALAN

Yes, that was a stroke of luck. But it's up to us to build our future. Luck will only get you so far. I worked hard to get to where I am. It wasn't luck that destroyed Jack's will. It wasn't luck that saved your properties. You have to take what you want, otherwise you end up with nothing.

CLAUDIA

You certainly are a man of action.

ALAN

And you my darling are a vision of loveliness.

ALAN kisses Claudia's hand again and releases it.
Alan's cell phone rings.

ALAN (cont'd)

Alan Thane. (Beat) You, you...talked to Jerry. (Beat) Get Jerry on the phone! Don't play footsie with his secretary. (Beat) I want a theater on Broadway, not off-off. Not even off. He god-damn owes me. I gave him Cody for nothing for that stupid review of his at Carnegie, "Gershwin Sings Tonight." Gershwin sings my ass! Get Jerry's cell number! Catch A Falling Star better be booked in a theater ON Broadway for the next fall line-up or heads will roll. If I don't hear Jerry's voice in my ear by tomorrow night--start looking for another job.

ALAN clicks phone off.

ALAN (cont'd)

Loser.

CLAUDIA

A new show?

ALAN

Yes, it's a new musical about the life and death of Jack Cody called Catch A Falling Star. Clever don't you think? The title was my idea. We start rehearsals next month in Toronto for a short run. Do a run around the New York critics. I've hired that English guy who wins all the awards to write the book, Sir Somebody or Another. Limey bastard was not cheap either, let me tell you. But this could pay off big, real big. I've already begun negotiating the film rights. Cody may be worth as much dead as alive if I pull this off. Jerry better cough up the theater I want. That schmuck owes me. This entire industry owes me. I, I mean, what would the world have been like without Jack Cody?

CLAUDIA

He will be missed. He added much joy and compassion to our lives.

ALAN

You're welcome. First, I'll sweep the Tony Awards, and then on to the Oscars. Alan Thane, Producer of the Best Musical on Broadway and Best Motion Picture. I like it.

JACK

Even if I'm stuck in No Man's Land for all of eternity, I'm not leaving until these two are stopped.

D'OGG

This is not good for our Game.

ALAN strides to the front door.

ALAN

Showtime. I'm off to the bank to close accounts. I'll catch a plane to Belize tonight, open a new account for the funds to be wired to, and still be in Wyoming in plenty of time for my wedding. Get this ceremony over with now, before she changes her mind.

CLAUDIA

(To Herself)

Sounds romantic.

ALAN

Did you say something, my darling?

CLAUDIA

You think of everything Alan.

ALAN

I do pride myself on being thorough. Remember Claudia, we are in this together. It would only take one phone call to, uh, educate an IRS auditor of your rather unusual situation. (Beat) Diane must believe that marrying me is her only way out of poverty, and please discourage her from this stupid quest to find some copy of the will that Jack supposedly made without my knowledge. Even if he did, I seriously doubt he had the brains to hide it somewhere I wouldn't know about.

JACK

(To Alan)

This is not over pal-o-mine!

ALAN blows Claudia a kiss.

ALAN

I will see you when I get back from Wyoming.

CLAUDIA smiles and waves. ALAN exits.

CLAUDIA's smile quickly fades. Thunder. Lightening.

D'OGG sits.

D'OGG

OWOOOOOO!

Carried By The Wind Overture. Don Giovanni
Chords. Crystal Ball glows.

CURTAIN.

Wind Chimes.

END OF ACT ONE.

ACT TWO

AT RISE: Minutes later. DIANE is passed out on the table. The black CRAB THINGY is still wrapped around her waist. Jack's lucky shirt is on the table. D'OGG is studying The Crab.

JACK is center stage strumming an up-tempo song, Ballad of the Wheel.

JACK

(Sings)

1. THE TREES HAVE ALL BEEN CUT
FOR THE INDUSTRY OF MAN.
BUT HOW WILL FOX AND BEAR
SURVIVE WITHOUT THEIR LAND?
EAGLE SOARS ABOVE
IN SEARCH OF MEADOWS FAIR.
BUT CONCRETE SMOTHERS ALL
POLLUTION FOULS THE AIR.

(REFRAIN)

AND THE WHEEL KEEPS A TURNIN'.
THE WHEEL, A BURNIN'.
THE WHEEL KEEPS A TURNIN'.
THE WHEEL OF GREED--A TURNIN'.

2. THE DRUMMER PLAYS THE MARCH,
ROCKETS ROAR AND FLARE,
FLAMES FILL THE SKY
WITH THE BURNING GLARE.
A FATHER NOW LIES DEAD,
FORSAKEN AND COLD.
AND IN HIS BLOODIED ARMS,
A BABY CRIES ALONE.

(REFRAIN)

AND THE WHEEL KEEPS A TURNIN'.
THE WHEEL, A BURNIN'.
THE WHEEL KEEPS A TURNIN'.
THE WHEEL OF WAR--A TURNIN'.

JACK (cont'd)

(BRIDGE)
EVEN IF I FAIL
TO CHANGE A BITTER END,
IN HOPE I TRUST IN D'OGG

D'OGG howls.

TO HELL THE WICKED SEND!

JACK walks over to Diane.

3. A WOMAN WITHOUT LOVE
IS A WOMAN WITHOUT HOPE.
BUT TELL ME HOW TO MEND
A HEART ALREADY BROKE?
SO I MUST FIND A WAY
TO RESURRECT HER SOUL,
AND BREATHE HER BACK TO LIFE
IN LOVING ARMS ENFOLD.

JACK walks center stage.

(REFRAIN)
AND THE WHEEL KEEPS A TURNIN'.
THE WHEEL, A BURNIN'.
THE WHEEL KEEPS A TURNIN'.
THE WHEEL OF LOVE--A TURNIN'.

D'OGG claps tethers wildly. JACK puts guitar down.

D'OGG

Feel better?

JACK

Yes.

D'OGG

I see you used my word.

JACK

Which one?

D'OGG

Hope.

JACK

Hope. A favorite of mine. I use it a lot.

D'OGG

Don't you think my poem lends itself to a melody? Your exotic beauty / so red and juicy / in sliding down your slope / my fountain fills with...hope.

JACK

Right. A minor key would be my choice.

D'OGG

Splendid! I think you should be a famous singer again, maybe this time on Zabar, and turn my poem into a song.

JACK

Yes, well, gotta grab those ideas when they flutter by.

D'OGG

I don't think you like my poem.

JACK

I didn't say that.

D'OGG

Then what was that remark you made earlier about keeping my day job? A Deity has feelings too, you know.

JACK

Dee, it's hard to think about writing a new song when I'm so worried about Diane. What do I know? Put it out there and see if you find an audience.

D'OGG

You know perfectly well there is no audience to play to in Eldorado. The COSMOS is too busy planning new versions of The Game for ecstatic bodily adventures. Why do you think Divinity created worlds?

JACK

I'm sure you'll tell me again.

D'OGG

To play! To create! To perform! To love! You are the eyes, and ears and nose and tongues, and toes, and fingers of Divinity. We can't experience the vibrations of life without you. We can't play The Galaxy Game without you. We need your ear to hear poetry and your voice to sing the music. We need your tongue to taste, and lick, and kiss. We need your nose to inhale the passion flower so all Eldoradians can enjoy as well. We feel love with you. Planets like Gaia provide exquisite playgrounds for us to romp around in and enjoy together, while we collect our Tokens. Everything is you, and we are there.

JACK walks over to stroke Diane's head.

JACK

Does Divinity experience pain?

D'OGG

Ruff! Yes, of course we feel pain.

JACK

I don't understand why we need pain.

D'OGG

Pain defines love. Without pain the ecstatic vibrations of love would not be fully realized. Hence, no Extasie.

JACK

What about war? Does Divinity feel the pain of war?

D'OGG walks to face front center stage.

D'OGG

War is entirely a Meat Body endeavor, a by-product of greed, an undesirable trait the Genetic Engineers can't seem to breed out, since warmongers are generally the ones who survive a war. The Chaos Engineers love it. Less work for them. Lucifer loves it. It furthers his Game plan to rid Gaia of Meat Bodies, and insert his own boring meatless body of rectilinear design. (Faces Jack) Remember Jack, Eldorado is also in a state of constant flux. Everything goes, everything returns.

JACK

So we have war because of bad in-breeding?

D'OGG

Something like that. But that's why the COSMOS needs Meat Bodies like you Jack, and your music. A vibration like yours helps to maintain a balance in The Game, while we work on eliminating the causes of that calamitous effect.

D'OGG walks over to nudge Jack.

D'OGG (cont'd)

You and me, we need each other. So how about it? So red and juicy. Your exotic beauty?

JACK

Okay. In my next life I'll try to turn your poem into a song.

D'OGG

Thanks, friend. We make a good team.

JACK puts his hand on D'ogg's tether.

JACK

Yes, Dee, we do. Listen, I was being a little selfish earlier. I certainly wouldn't have wanted an entire race of Foobars, whatever they are, to be lost.

D'OGG pets Jack.

D'OGG

Such a good Jack. Don't worry about it. The plane crash was a terrible shock to your Meat Body.

JACK

And I want to thank you for saving me all those other times, and for helping me out now.

D'OGG howls, and continues petting Jack.

D'OGG

It is my honor and distinct pleasure to be your guide, my friend. Let me lead you through The Hoop before it's too late. Besides losing your Game Tokens, you are gambling with your very unique talent to hang around in No Man's Land like this. I would be shirking my Deity of the Gilded Guides' duty, if I did not beg you to please, go with me now to Eldorado!

DIANE moans. JACK walks away from D'ogg to stand by Diane.

JACK

I won't leave Diane like this.

D'OGG

You could end up the ghost of an idea.

JACK

So be it. I'm not leaving until Diane is okay and my will is found.

D'OGG

One may not depend on the other.

JACK

Why do you say that?

D'OGG

Maybe the will is more important to you than to Diane?

JACK

Didn't you hear what she said? She's miserable and penniless.

D'OGG

I suspect her real poverty to be of something far greater than a lack of organic goods. That crab attaches to people who do not feel love in their hearts.

DIANE moans louder.

JACK

Then I need to fix that. Is she dying?

D'OGG

I sense a sedative. Nothing life threatening. However, this crab elemental worries me.

JACK

What can be done?

D'OGG

I'm thinking.

JACK

My shirt. I left a key in the pocket of my lucky shirt! If it's still there and Diane finds it...can't you move things, turn the shirt upside down or something?

D'OGG

I'm thinking.

JACK

Can I move things?

D'OGG

Yes, it's easy, but you might need a refresher class on how to maneuver in the Non Doing Realm.

JACK

Non Doing Realm?

D'OGG

The Non Doing Realm. The result of subtracting the universe from itself. The space where Deity can interact with organic matter. I will guide you through the steps again after your Extasie recharge.

JACK

We need to do something now! Diane must find that key.

D'OGG

Getting the key out of your shirt pocket is not the hard part. How will your sister know what to do with it?

JACK

Uh, telepathically tell her it's for a deposit box at the bank?

D'OGG

Theoretically possible. And will Claudia allow me to use her body to communicate? This is a delicate situation.

Don Giovanni, Don Ottavio plays softly.

CLAUDIA enters holding a glass of water and places it next to Diane. She walks over to the mirror; smooths her hair and adjusts her clothes, repositioning her breasts.

D'OGG claps tethers. Time Warp sounds. D'OGG walks over to Claudia and watches her closely as she repeats the hair/breast action.

JACK

Did I miss a clue or something?

D'OGG

No, just admiring her lovely attachments. Skin on skin, eh?

JACK glares at D'ogg.

D'OGG (cont'd)

What? To play, Jack, we're here to play.

CLAUDIA walks over to Diane, takes a pill out of her pocket and drops it in the glass of water.

JACK

That witch!

D'OGG

Beware. Sometimes things are not what they seem.

CLAUDIA lights a candle and incense. She takes a vial from her pocket and waves it under Diane's nose.

DIANE bolts upright.

DIANE

Where am I?

CLAUDIA

Do you know who I am Diane?

Beat.

DIANE

Yes, you're Madame Claudia. What happened?

CLAUDIA

I think you fainted. Must be all the stress. Please sit down.

CLAUDIA hands her a glass.

CLAUDIA (cont'd)

Here, drink this. You'll feel better.

DIANE sits down. She takes a sip from the glass.

DIANE

I feel...strange.

CLAUDIA

And who wouldn't? Brother in a plane crash and your fiancé unfaithful. It's more than anyone should have to endure.

DIANE

Did I say Alan was unfaithful?

CLAUDIA

Well, not exactly, but you did say he was greedy and loved money, and usually unscrupulous people have other faults.

DIANE

Yes, but I didn't say Alan was unfaithful.

CLAUDIA

Perhaps you didn't. I just assumed.

DIANE

Anyway, who cares. My life is over.

CLAUDIA comforts Diane. JACK hovers close by.

JACK

Diane no! You must hang on. You must have hope that things will get better. (Runs to D'ogg) Dee, Diane doesn't deserve this. This is all my fault. I should be punished, not her.

D'OGG

Don't be absurd Jack. There is only so much we can do under the circumstances.

JACK

We've got to help her. If Diane kills herself, I will stay behind to be with her.

D'OGG

A brilliant plan! And then you both wander around lost in No Man's Land for all of eternity. You may not even be able to find her after she crosses over in such despair. This is no solution. (Aside) This will not get either of us The Tokens waiting for us in Eldorado.

DIANE puts the glass down.

DIANE

I think I better be going.

DIANE attempts to stand. Dizzy. Sits back down.

CLAUDIA

Please, my dear. Just relax. Why don't we try to finish your session?

JACK

She's drugged Diane again. And that crab thing looks bigger.

CLAUDIA

Have faith your questions will be answered.

DIANE

Faith? Don't you need something to believe in first?

CLAUDIA

Believe what your heart tells you.

CLAUDIA holds out her hand. DIANE hesitates, but then gives Claudia her hand. CLAUDIA closes her eyes.

CLAUDIA (cont'd)

Henry John Christoph the Third! Enter my body and speak!

Crystal glows.

D'OGG

Watch a pro at work. Stand by your sister and concentrate.

D'OGG rubs tethers together and jumps under Claudia's chair. JACK stands by Diane.

CLAUDIA's expression changes to one of utter bliss, an other-worldly glow.

Don Giovanni stops.

ANGELIC VOICES

Diane!

DIANE jerks her hand away.

DIANE

Who said that!?

Lights spiral around the two women.

DIANE (cont'd)

Madame Claudia?

Wind Chimes.

CLAUDIA speaks with JACK's VOICE combined
with musical overtones.

CLAUDIA/JACK

Diane.

DIANE

(Overwhelmed)

Uh...

CLAUDIA/JACK

Diane. It's me.

DIANE

Jack?

CLAUDIA/JACK

Yes, it's me.

DIANE cries. JACK hands her a tissue. DIANE grabs
it.

DIANE

Did you do that?

CLAUDIA/JACK

Yes.

DIANE

How do I know it's really you?

CLAUDIA/JACK

Hold my hand.

CLAUDIA extends her hand. DIANE slowly takes it.
Orchestrated tag of Carried By The Wind.

DIANE

(Violins crescendo with Diane's wail)

Ahh Wind!

The CRAB THINGY shrivels up; falls away.

Music decrescendos.

DIANE (cont'd)

Jack, are you still there?

CLAUDIA/JACK

Yes, Diane.

DIANE

We were riding in Gunbarrel Canyon. It was so real. We were little again. How old were we?

CLAUDIA/JACK

You were only six. I was twelve.

DIANE

You were riding that American Paint.

CLAUDIA/JACK

Bucky. My favorite stallion.

DIANE

Bucky. Yes, it was Bucky! No one could know that but you. I was riding Star, my Palomino. I felt the wind in my hair. And the sunshine sparkled on the lake. The water looked like it was dancing. Oh, such a beautiful day!

CLAUDIA/JACK

Yes, it was.

DIANE

But then that rattler spooked Star, and she bolted. I was barely hanging on when you caught up with us.

CLAUDIA/JACK

You were doing just fine.

DIANE

No. I panicked. I was scared to death, but not you. You were always better with the animals than me. You saved my life that day. (Beat) Oh Jack, I love you so much!

CLAUDIA/JACK

I love you too, little sis. Can you forgive me for not being a better big brother?

DIANE

Forgive you? I'm the one who bad-mouthed you. Well, not as your publicist, but to Mom, and okay, maybe...Victoria.

JACK is animated; whispers in D'ogg's ear.

CLAUDIA/JACK

Did you say something to Victoria to make her break up with me?

DIANE

Maybe. But...

JACK

I knew it! What did you tell her? (To D'ogg) Go on. Ask.

CLAUDIA/JACK

What did you tell her?

DIANE

Oh, I don't remember.

JACK whispers again.

CLAUDIA/JACK

Tell me, or I'm tellin' Mom when I see her.

DIANE

Mom? Mom's there? (Beat) Oh God! You always did tell on me.

CLAUDIA/JACK

What's a brother for?

DIANE

Like that night I spent with my boyfriend.

JACK whispers.

CLAUDIA/JACK

You were only sixteen.

DIANE

And the time you told Dad I was drinking too much at a party.

CLAUDIA/JACK

I was looking out for you.

DIANE

I'd only had a couple drinks, and I was twenty-five years old. You were drinking, too.

JACK whispers to D'ogg.

CLAUDIA/JACK

I care, okay. What did you tell Victoria?

Beat.

Thunder. Lightening.

DIANE

Alright! I told her you were really...bi.

JACK jumps up and down.

CLAUDIA/JACK

Bi? Bi-sexual!?

DIANE shakes her head yes. JACK walks over to D'OGG rolling around laughing.

JACK

Hey Dee, that's not funny.

D'OGG sits.

D'OGG

As an ardent supporter of molecular sharing between all Meat Bodies, I never understood your sexual preference for one gender. Why miss out on half the fun?

JACK pouts.

DIANE

I admit it. I was jealous. You flying all over the world, while I was stuck in Wyoming. But you were never there for me. You didn't show up for my high school play or my graduation or the opening of my Off-Off Broadway show. Not even my 21st birthday party.

D'OGG

Jack, how cruel. Not even your little sister's 21st birthday party? You really were a bad brother.

JACK

I guess Diane had her reasons. But Victoria was...

DIANE

Besides, I didn't have the heart to tell you that Victoria was screwing some actor.

JACK

Oh, really. Well, that explains a lot. But what about Alicia? Did she tell that...

D'OGG stands and shakes tether at Jack.

D'OGG

Jack, stay on task. Let's move this along. Your problems with female Meat Bodies are all in the past.

JACK

But I would still like to know...

D'OGG points tether at Jack.

D'OGG

Bad Jack.

DIANE

Jack? Please forgive me.

D'OGG points tether at Diane.

D'OGG

Jack, go!

JACK hangs his head and walks back over to Diane, touching her shoulder. D'OGG rolls back under Claudia.

CLAUDIA/JACK

We will forgive each other. Deal?

DIANE

Deal. (Beat) Jack? Did Alan sabotage your plane?

CLAUDIA/JACK

No.

Beat.

DIANE

Okay. Good. That's good.

The Lights spiral less.

CLAUDIA/JACK

It's time.

DIANE

No, don't go! I'm not ready for you to go. Please, Jack. Don't leave me.

CLAUDIA/JACK

Sis, it's time.

DIANE

(Crying)

But will I ever see you again?

JACK stoops down and bows his head.

CLAUDIA/JACK

Diane, listen very carefully. You must stay connected to loving thoughts. You must fill your heart with love, and the Extasie of that love will keep you, me, Mom, Dad, Tilly, all of us together now, and in the Other Life.

DIANE

Dad's there, too? I miss everyone so much.

CLAUDIA/JACK

We're all here for you.

DIANE

If I was dead I could be with you and Mom and Dad.

JACK whispers to D'ogg.

CLAUDIA/JACK

Sis, life is already so short. Live for us. Live for me. Be my eyes. Breathe for me. Enjoy your life. We'll all be together soon enough. Aunt Tilly needs you. And your family needs you.

DIANE

Family? What family?

JACK whispers to D'ogg.

CLAUDIA/JACK

The one you're going to have.

DIANE

I'm not pregnant and I don't want kids, especially with Alan.

CLAUDIA/JACK

Alan is not the father.

DIANE

You mean, there's someone else?

CLAUDIA/JACK

Yes. There always has been.

JACK whispers to D'ogg.

DIANE

Sam? I broke up with him. He was only dating me to get a song idea to you.

CLAUDIA/JACK

You are wrong Diane. I contacted Sam about the song.

DIANE

But, I found his song demo on your desk in the studio, and he never told me he was giving it to you.

CLAUDIA/JACK

I picked the demo up on the kitchen counter at your place without asking either of you. Sam's a good songwriter.

Beat.

DIANE

Sam...but after the things I said.

CLAUDIA/JACK

Try him. He still loves you. And I know you still love him.

DIANE

But Alan, he controls all the...oh, I'm so confused. I hate Alan!

CLAUDIA/JACK

Hate will destroy you. Alan will pay for his misdeeds, one way or another. If you die with anger in your heart, you will end up lost in No Man's Land.

DIANE

I don't know Jack. You were always the kind one, the loving one. I'm not like you.

CLAUDIA/JACK

Diane, you are an instrument of beauty and grace. A being meant to love and be loved.

DIANE

But I can't do this alone.

CLAUDIA/JACK

Remember Gunbarrel Canyon. I'm watchin' your back, kiddo.

DIANE

I want to believe that.

CLAUDIA/JACK

Then do. Believe it. Nothing's changed. Just because you can't see me doesn't mean you can't feel my love.

DIANE

But, what if I don't feel it?

CLAUDIA/JACK

Just ask, and you will.

DIANE

But...

CLAUDIA/JACK

Sis, be alive to love and be loved.

DIANE

But...

CLAUDIA/JACK

Just ask.

DIANE

Okay. I'll try.

CLAUDIA/JACK

See you soon, sis.

Lights stop spiraling. CLAUDIA collapses on the table. D'OGG rises and stretches. DIANE sobs.

D'OGG

One of my better performances.

D'OGG bows. JACK strokes DIANE's head.

JACK

She didn't ask about my will. I wanted to tell her about the will.

DIANE wipes her eyes. She regally stands and walks center stage.

Wind Chimes.

DIANE

(A Cappella)

ANYTIME I NEED IT YOU WILL SEND
A MELODY, CARRIED BY THE WIND.

DIANE stands transfixed.

JACK

But what about my will?

D'OGG

Only questions asked can be answered. You know the rules. Our lovely and talented Claudia is a frail Meat Body, and she does have limits. Cheer up, Jack. Diane's priorities are rearranged. Look. The crab is gone. Her subtle body can now receive light and love. Extasie can flow. Diane is back in The Game. And now we can jump through The Hoop and collect our Tokens.

Doorbell.

CLAUDIA lifts her head. Her hair is no longer in a French twist, and flows loose on her shoulder. Her expression is blissful. She walks to the door, and opens it.

LEONARD, the hair stylist, walks in. He cannot see or hear beings in the Other Life.

JACK walks around the action with D'OGG following on all fours.

LEONARD

Oh, my gawd, Claudia.

CLAUDIA

(Normal Voice)

Leonard? Why are you here?

LEONARD

I like this new look. Very soft. Nice.

LEONARD looks at her hair closer.

LEONARD (cont'd)

You must get into the salon this week. Your roots are showing.

CLAUDIA

Leonard. I'm busy right now.

LEONARD

I'm sorry to barge in, but I didn't have your phone number with me.

CLAUDIA tries to push Leonard out the door.

CLAUDIA

Leonard. This is not a good time.

LEONARD pushes against the door, sticking only his head around.

LEONARD

Claudia, I really need to speak to you. It's about Alan.

CLAUDIA grabs Leonard and pulls him in.

CLAUDIA

What about Alan?

LEONARD

I was just now walking down the street minding my own business. I thought, gee, the rain has stopped, maybe I'll just walk to the salon, I do need the exercise since I've put on a little tire here. Trudy, our new salon manager, caters in the most fabulous lunch from Sardi's. Yesterday we had this yummie organic salmon with horseradish potatoes that is to die for.

CLAUDIA

Leonard, get to the point!

LEONARD

I'm sorry, I'm so scattered right now. Listen, do you have any water?

CLAUDIA walks over to table and LEONARD follows. She hands him the water. He drinks.

LEONARD (cont'd)

Ohhh I feel tingly. I've had quite a shock. You won't believe what I saw Claudia! I saw Alan...

LEONARD drinks more water. ALAN falls into the room. Dead. JACK and D'OGG walk over to him.

D'OGG

Look what the cat dragged in. He is most definitely out of The Game.

JACK

Alan?

ALAN stands. Looks around.

ALAN

Where am I? Jack? I must be having a nightmare.

CLAUDIA

Leonard, please, are you sure this won't wait? I'm right in the middle of a session!

LEONARD

Why there's Diane.

LEONARD puts the glass down, and runs over to Diane, taking her hand.

DIANE

Leonard. Why are you here?

LEONARD

Sweetie, I am so sorry.

DIANE

What for?

LEONARD

I hate to be the bearer of such tragic news, but (Beat) Alan is dead.

ALAN

No, I'm not.

ALAN tries to dial his cell phone.

JACK

Yes, Alan. You're dead.

CLAUDIA

Alan is dead!

DIANE

Alan is dead!

D'OGG

Technically, it's called the...

JACK

Other Life.

D'OGG

(To Jack)

There you go again finishing my sentences Mr. Tacky-Shirt.

ALAN

I am not dead! (Tries to call on cell phone) What's wrong with this stupid phone?

JACK

(To D'ogg)

Alan has no guide?

D'OGG

Those are the rules. Only Meat Bodies who cross over with love in their hearts attract a Deity of the Gilded Guides. Alan is heartless.

LEONARD

First your brother, and now your fiancé. I can't tell you how sorry I am.

DIANE

Leonard, how do you know Alan is dead?

LEONARD

I saw it with my own eyes. I was walking down the street right in front of Claudia's building and Alan brushed right past me.

ALAN

He's lying.

DIANE

Why was Alan on Riverside Drive? I thought he'd already left for Wyoming?

ALAN

I am on my way to the bank.

ALAN tries to open the door, but he falls through it.
He crawls back into the room.

LEONARD

Well, sweetie, I don't know. He didn't say hello or anything, which I thought a bit bizarre, and I must say I was feeling just a little bit insulted.

ALAN walks over to Leonard.

ALAN

(Yells)

That's because it didn't happen, you nincompoop.

LEONARD brushes his ear like a mosquito is buzzing around it.

DIANE

Do you know why Alan was walking in front of your building Madame Claudia?

CLAUDIA

Let Leonard finish his story, dear.

LEONARD

Yes, well, before I could say a word, Alan started to cross the street, and he stepped right in front of one of those bulletproof trucks that picks up the money at all the businesses. Oh, what do you call that thing?

CLAUDIA

An armored car? Alan was run over by an armored car!?

LEONARD

Yes.

DIANE

Oh my god.

LEONARD'S legs buckle, and DIANE catches him.
CLAUDIA helps them both hobble over to the table
to sit.

ALAN walks over to look in the mirror, does a
double take. Shocked.

ALAN

My face. It's not in the mirror. This can't be happening.

LEONARD

(Gasping)

Forgive me Diane. I should be comforting you.

DIANE

It's okay Leonard. It's, it's shocking.

LEONARD

So unreal, like watching a movie.

ALAN slumps.

ALAN

This is the damndest dream I've ever had.

DIANE

Maybe this is all my fault. Maybe this happened because I hated him so much. Maybe
I'm the evil one.

JACK ministers to Diane. D'OGG stands by impatient.

JACK

(To Diane)

Diane! Remember, you are an instrument of beauty and grace. To love and be loved.

D'OGG

Yet, another delay.

LEONARD

You hated Alan? Well, good thing you didn't marry him. I didn't know what you saw in him anyway. I hate to speak ill of the dead, but he was a rude man. And cheap, too! All the girls complained about his tips.

CLAUDIA takes a pill out of her pocket, puts it in the water, and takes a drink. She offers it to Diane.

CLAUDIA

Here. Valium.

DIANE waves it off.

DIANE

No. I don't think I need it. I'm okay.

LEONARD grabs it and chugs it down.

LEONARD

Diane. You had nothing to do with this. It was Alan's time. May he rest in peace.

CLAUDIA

Leonard is right. Alan created his own destiny.

DIANE

I hated Alan, but I didn't wish him dead.

CLAUDIA

What this means, Diane, is that you control your own destiny, and maybe your brother's estate.

DIANE

I don't know about that. I bet Alan has a last will and testament. He has a son from a previous marriage in law school, and I bet somehow or another I'll be screwed.

CLAUDIA meditates.

ALAN

You better believe I've got a will, and you're gettin' nothing babe! Alan Jr. will see to that. But wait a minute, this is a dream. This is a dream. This is a dream.

D'OGG

Karma check, eh Alan? But you bypassed The Wheel, did you not? Bad boy! It will not help your Game to carry all that negative Karma around.

ALAN

Karma? I don't have time for this crap. And why am I talking to a dog?

ALAN walks over to Diane.

ALAN (cont'd)

Diane. (Beat) Diane!

JACK

She can't hear you Alan. You're dead.

ALAN

Diane. Stop messing with me. Unless you want to end up working as a waitress and living in a dump, you had better answer me!

JACK

Alan. You can't hurt us anymore.

ALAN turns to Claudia.

ALAN

Claudia!

JACK

She can't hear you either, Alan.

ALAN

Claudia, you have got to help me wake up!

JACK

Alan, it's no use.

ALAN grovels by Claudia's chair.

ALAN

Claudia, please!

CLAUDIA stops meditating.

CLAUDIA

(To Diane)

I don't sense a disturbed Spirit. Alan has moved on, and so must you.

ALAN

Claudia, how can you say that? I'm right here!

D'OGG

Clever Claudia, you are a wench.

DIANE walks center stage.

DIANE

I feel much lighter, as if a huge weight has been lifted off of my chest.

LEONARD

You go girl.

DIANE

I believe one day I'll see Jack and my parents again. And, maybe Sam will take me back. In fact, I don't care about the money anymore. I actually feel sorry for Alan. He must have suffered.

LEONARD

No. One minute here, the next minute, boom! Gone. Flatter than a...

CLAUDIA

Leonard. We can do without the visual.

ALAN

(To Diane)

You bitch!

As DIANE walks around, ALAN lunges to strangle Diane, but his limbs seem to go right through her.

DIANE

Maybe I should be doing something? Going to the hospital? Are the police downstairs. I mean, I was his...

LEONARD

Sweetie, there's nothing for you to do.

CLAUDIA

Leonard's right. Let Alan Jr. deal with it.

ALAN writhes on the ground.

JACK

Alan, you might as well face fact. You are dead.

D'OGG

Okay Jack, we're done here.

ALAN stands.

ALAN

Get away from me! You are not real. This is not real. I am on my way to the bank to close your last account and marry your sister. What do you think of that, you, you...over-rated lounge singer!

JACK

Okay, pal-o-mine, whatever.

ALAN

And stop calling me pal-o-mine. You drive me nuts with all your pal-o-mines. I'm not your pal, okay? I am your creator. You were a non-entity singing in bars in The Village before I came along.

JACK

Okay, pal, you know it all. Oh, and too bad about your new show about my life. I guess you won't get that Tony after all.

ALAN

We'll just see about that. Do you think Alan Thane would let a little thing like death stop him. Anyway, this is all just a bad dream. And, of course, you would be hanging around a stupid dog in my nightmare. I hate dogs.

(To D'ogg)

Did you hear that, you freak? I hate dogs!

D'OGG

Game. Over.

D'OGG stands very tall center stage with tethers
outstretched. Don Giovanni, "a cenar teco
m'invitasti" accompanies Angelic Voices.

Thunder. Lightening.

D'OGG & ANGELIC VOICES

PRIMO BUFFO DI MEZZO CARATTERE. PRIMO BUFFO DI MEZZO CARATTERE.

A wind blows ALAN all over the stage.

PREACHER BOB O.S.

My God is an angry God!

Lightening crack. Lights flicker.

ALAN disappears. Music stops.

JACK

I wished I'd written that.

JACK collapses. D'OGG runs to his side.

D'OGG

We must get you to Eldorado!

LEONARD

Nasty weather.

DIANE walks behind Claudia to study her.

DIANE

Maybe Alan is here to haunt us.

CLAUDIA

It was only the storm, dear. What with the ancient wiring in these pre-war
buildings...the electricity always goes off and on in storms. As I said, Alan has moved
on. Haunting us is probably the last thing on Alan's mind right now.

ALAN O.S.

Get away from me, you hick!

PREACHER BOB O.S.

Repent before it's too late!

DIANE

Madam Claudia? Why is it you seem to know so much about Alan?

CLAUDIA walks over to cabinet and retrieves a Recording Device. She hands it to Diane.

DIANE (cont'd)

What's this?

CLAUDIA

A recording of our session, and Alan's confession about destroying Jack's will.

LEONARD

Alan destroyed Jack's will?

DIANE

I knew it! I knew he was guilty of something. (Beat) Alan was here? In this room?

CLAUDIA

While you were passed out. I spiked your tea with a little sedative.

DIANE

You drugged me!?

LEONARD

Why Claudia! Was I drugged, too? (To Self) You just never know someone.

CLAUDIA

Of course not, Leonard!

LEONARD

I knew that.

CLAUDIA

Diane, I realize it was a tricky move, but I had my reasons. I wasn't entirely sold on Alan's motives. I suspected he might confess, if he thought I was as unscrupulous as he. Unfortunately, I've had some experience with the criminal mind. It's all on the recording.

DIANE takes it.

DIANE

I don't understand.

CLAUDIA

Alan sought me out soon after your brother died. It seems Leonard also told him about my gift, and he was taking no chances about you backing out of the marriage. He wanted me to pretend I was channeling your mother, and urge you to marry him.

LEONARD gestures wildly "not me."

CLAUDIA (cont'd)

Leonard, relax. You had no way of knowing Alan wanted to screw the living, not communicate with Spirit.

LEONARD relaxes.

DIANE

(To Claudia)

Just what exactly did Alan do for you?

CLAUDIA

My darling Henri got into hot water with a little insider trading, which also alerted the Internal Revenue Service. He's in jail awaiting trial. However, the government doesn't seem to care if a spouse has no prior knowledge of her partner's wrong doing. Alan said he could create a Trust, so my properties, the properties I brought into the marriage, would be secure. At least, I thought it was a legitimate Trust, but Alan's gift came with strings attached. He really was naughty. After you play that recording to the authorities, it seems most likely the IRS will take my properties anyway.

DIANE

No one would have ever known. Why tell me this now?

CLAUDIA

I meant what I said about the importance of my life with Spirit. The energy around pandering and theft interferes with my channel. Alan led me to believe you had feelings for him, but that you were letting grief get in the way of your marrying him. He said he cared only for your well-being and wanted me to give you a little nudge. I didn't see the harm in that. He was a bit flirtatious, but I'm accustomed to cheeky men, who actually do the right thing once in a while. Then I met you and discovered the real truth. And then, Alan showed his true colors, while you were...sleeping.

DIANE

So, you would you give up everything you own for someone you just met?

CLAUDIA

Call it a favor to your brother for all his beautiful music, and for his valiant effort to make life on this planet better for us all. Besides, I like to play a clean game. If I lose my properties, then, oh well, at least I'm still alive. I can get more. That's the chance you take when you pick up a snake by the tail. Sometimes the damn thing turns around and bites you.

JACK

It seems I was wrong about her.

D'OGG

Yes, she is a unique Meat Body. She and her Guide win extra Tokens for this humane act.

DIANE

Why don't Spirits warn you, especially about your husband?

CLAUDIA

Oh, I had suspicions about Alan, that's why I spiked your tea, but as far as relationships go, some poet once said, "Love is being stupid together."

D'OGG

I tried to warn her.

CLAUDIA

And love is most definitely deaf, dumb, and blind. I wouldn't have listened. Henri was very persuasive and quite the dashing figure. He was a Renoir, after all.

D'OGG

My passionate Claudia. You are a worthy muse.

LEONARD

Such a shame. Henri was impeccable about his grooming.

CLAUDIA

And an incorrigible liar and cheat. Alan reminded me just a little of Henri. The arrogance. Maybe you can use the recording to at least show the authorities that Jack had a last will and testament.

DIANE

I doubt it will matter without an original copy.

CLAUDIA

It might buy you some time while you look for a copy.

DIANE

I don't think I even care anymore. Alan had all the money, and now he's dead, like Jack. Maybe the money is a curse.

LEONARD

I should be so cursed.

DIANE hands the recording to Claudia.

DIANE

Here, you keep it.

CLAUDIA refuses to take it.

CLAUDIA

No, no, I want you to have it. On that recording is your conversation with Jack. Listen to it when you're having a bad moment. I want you to always remember what he said and carry the memory of his love in your heart.

DIANE

The vision, it seemed so real. The trees, the water, it felt like we were actually riding in the canyon. I think I even smelled horses.

CLAUDIA

Doubting so soon?

DIANE

Maybe a little.

JACK

Diane, no.

CLAUDIA

Forget what you think about me. Forget about everyone. Only trust what your heart tells you. Your heart is always your best guide.

DIANE

Of course, I want to believe I'll be with my family again.

CLAUDIA

How would I know Bucky was the name of Jack's stallion?

DIANE

True. You know, I never mentioned that day to anyone and neither did Jack. At the time, I was afraid they wouldn't let me back on my horse. Only Jack and I knew what happened that day.

CLAUDIA

Then there's your answer.

DIANE

How do you know what he said?

CLAUDIA

When I allow Spirit to enter my body, it's as if I step aside and watch. And I must say, Jack's spirit was one of the sweetest, most sensually rewarding spirits I've ever encountered.

LEONARD

I always miss all the juicy stuff.

D'OGG helps JACK to stand.

D'OGG

You hear that, my friend? We're a hit with Claudia. We should take our show on the road.

CLAUDIA

In fact, I feel like a new woman. I hope you can find some peace now, my dear.

CLAUDIA and DIANE hug.

DIANE

I'm okay. I'll get a job at a Dude Ranch if I have to, or something, anything, as long as Aunt Tilly and I are together. And who knows, maybe Sam will forgive me. Jack said Sam still loves me. If he does, well, we'll see.

LEONARD picks up JACK's SHIRT and fluffs it around. A key falls on the table, and a piece of paper flutters away.

JACK weakly tries to intercept the paper to no avail.

JACK

Oh no.

DIANE picks up the key.

DIANE

A key? I wonder what it's for?

LEONARD

Oh, I like this shirt. Needs a little ironing.

DIANE

Take it. That was Jack's lucky shirt.

LEONARD

Really? Is it Lotto lucky?

DIANE

Not that I know of, but Jack thought it was lucky for meeting girls, and he had no trouble doing that.

LEONARD

(Chokes)

Oh, I'm not ready to date. I still miss Blaze. I need to win the lottery. I'm trying to put some money together to commission a statue for Blaze in Memorial Park.

DIANE and CLAUDIA comfort Leonard.

JACK

Blasted!

D'OGG

Ah, your sister is right. You were one lucky hound dog with the ladies.

JACK

No, I mean yes, but I mean no, that's not why I'm upset. That piece of paper was the receipt for a deposit box where I hid a copy of my new will the day I died, I mean crashed, I mean, oh whatever. I had planned to tell Diane and give her the key at dinner that night. Dee do something!

D'OGG

What difference does it make? Diane seems happy, Leonard has a new shirt, and Claudia thinks we're sensuous. And besides forfeiting all our hard earned Tokens, you are going to fade into No Man's Land, if we don't jump through The Hoop now!

JACK

This is all just about The Galaxy Game for you, isn't it?

D'OGG

What would you rather do? Not play?

JACK

I would rather Diane find my will.

JACK turns away to pout.

LEONARD

I find so much comfort in knowing I'll see Blaze again one day. Thank you Claudia.

CLAUDIA

No deathly angel 'twixt my face and thine, / But stoop Thyself to gather my life's rose, /
And smile away my mortal to Divine!

D'OGG walks over to admire Claudia.

D'OGG

Exquisite creature.

JACK

Diane needs to find my will and put Aunt Tilly back in her home. And I don't want the Internal Revenue Service to take half of all my money. Why should the government use my money to fund bloody wars? I'm not done here.

D'OGG

Don't you really mean you need Diane to find your will? That Game is old news, Jack! We must move forward.

JACK

(Fainter)

No.

D'OGG is fixated on Claudia.

JACK is being pulled toward the nether regions of No Man's Land.

D'OGG

Talk and more talk. I could have already guided you to Eldorado, cashed in our Tokens, and spiraled back here to share delectable essences with Madame Claudia. The Madame is an excellent paramour for my poetry. Delicious and cherry, your lips make me merry.

JACK

(Fading)

Game or no game, a man has to stand up for what he believes in, whether he's alive, or dead.

JACK fades into the nether regions of No Man's Land.

CLAUDIA adjusts her dress. D'OGG leans in closer.

D'OGG

(To Self)

ARRFFF! Such a stubborn soul. If only I could drag him through The Hoop.

(Beat) Oh all right. I may have one trick that will work.

D'OGG looks over to where Jack was.

D'OGG (cont'd)

Jack?

D'OGG gallops around looking for Jack and stops in front of the nether region where Jack disappeared.

D'OGG (cont'd)

Jack! Hang on! I'm coming!

D'OGG claps tethers. Spiraling Lights. Electronic Sounds. Don Giovanni Chords. D'OGG leaps into the nether regions of No Man's Land. Wailing. Barking. Howling.

All sound stops.

Beat.

D'OGG leaps out of No Man's Land, dragging Jack behind him. D'ogg waves his tethers and the nether regions recede. JACK is lifeless. D'OGG performs DPR (Divine Pulmonary Resuscitation) on Jack.

JACK

(Croaking)

Dee. Thanks pal.

D'OGG

I almost lost your scent.

JACK

I'm sorry to be so much trouble, but please, isn't there some way for Diane to find my will?

D'OGG

My friend, lucky for you a talent such as yours is hard to find in any Galaxy Game in the known Universe. Now stay.

D'OGG claps appendages. Time warp sounds. D'OGG tends to Jack still prone on the ground.

CLAUDIA, DIANE, and LEONARD work back through their actions. LEONARD picks up Jack's shirt and fluffs it around. A key falls on the table, and a piece of paper flutters.

D'OGG leaps to catch the paper, places it at Leonard's feet, and returns to nurse Jack.

DIANE picks up the key.

DIANE

A key? I wonder what it's for?

LEONARD picks up the paper.

LEONARD

This is some sort of receipt.

LEONARD hands the receipt to Diane.

DIANE

This is a bank receipt for a deposit box. Leonard, this must be a key for a safety deposit box. I bet this is where Jack hid a copy of his will!

LEONARD

That's a good thing, right?

DIANE hugs Leonard.

DIANE

Oh Leonard, yes! You are a genius! We just won the lottery!

LEONARD

I am? We did! Oh, I'm so happy. Do you think I can use some of the money to commission a marble statue for my Blaze? I want to put it in Memorial Park, where I can sit and think about all the happy times we shared.

DIANE

Of course you can.

DIANE and CLAUDIA comfort Leonard. JACK sits up. D'OGG helps him stand.

JACK

I thought past events couldn't be changed.

D'OGG

So, I exaggerated. The Divinity at the Center gives certain decorated Guides of the Guild, such as myself, discretionary Tokens for small events. I have no doubt you will more than pay back my investment.

JACK

I thought there were rules you had to follow?

D'OGG

Ah, yes, those. I may have to answer some inquiries from the Ascension Committee, but I think I followed their mandate, "Do No Harm." Now that Diane is filled with the Extasie of love, it shouldn't matter whether or not she has money. Hopefully, her future choices will all be made from her heart, and not for greedy financial gain.

JACK

I don't suppose you could change the results of a plane crash, oh pal-o-mine.

D'OGG shakes head no, places a tether on Jack's shoulder.

D'OGG

If it were up to me, but unfortunately, my friend, it's not. We really must go.

JACK picks up his guitar. D'OGG pats him on the back.

D'OGG (cont'd)

You did it, Jack. You saved your sister from No Man's Land.

JACK

Dee, my friend, you saved us both.

D'OGG

It was your memory that shriveled the crab elemental.

JACK

We did it. Together.

D'OGG bows.

D'OGG

Together.

JACK limps over to Diane and kisses her on the cheek.

JACK

See you soon, sis.

DIANE reacts to the kiss.

CLAUDIA

Oh my, I'm feeling a lot of love in this room.

LEONARD

Yes, me too.

Beat.

DIANE

Me...too.

THE HOOP appears.

D'OGG

Jack. Come.

D'OGG extends a tether, and Jack takes it.

D'OGG (cont'd)

Ha, ha! And we leave Lucifer and his mealy minions in the dust!

JACK

Okay Dee. Let's go play another Game. We have more songs to write.

D'OGG leads Jack to The Hoop.

D'OGG

Absolutely! I have a new limerick you are going to love; Delicious and cherry. Your lips make me merry.

JACK shakes his head in disgust.

D'OGG (cont'd)

Too cliché? I have another.

Orchestrated Carried By The Wind drowns out
D'ogg's voice.

ANGELIC VOICES

IN YOUR DARKEST HOUR I WILL SEND, A MELODY, CARRIED BY THE WIND.

JACK

Fan-tas-tic.

The Hoop of the Golden Light of Extasie. Lights flash.
Thunder. D'OGG jumps through, then Jack, and they
disappear.

The sound of Ka-Ching.

CLAUDIA, DIANE, and LEONARD cling to each
other.

BLACKOUT

ALAN O.S.

Can someone get me out of here?

PREACHER BOB O.S.

Stick with me, son, and I'll save you from hell fire and damnation!

ALAN O.S.

I don't believe in hell, you idiot!

D'OGG howls. Crystal Ball glows. Wind Chimes.

THE END.

Vita

Connie Reeder Nichols (Conrad Reeder) was born in Columbus, Ohio. She received her BA from Thomas A. Edison State College in Trenton, New Jersey, and her MFA from the University of New Orleans. *Jack is ~~Dead~~* was submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the University of New Orleans in partial fulfillment of the requirements of the degree of Master of Fine Arts In Film, Theatre and Communication Arts Creative Writing: Playwriting. She is currently a doctoral candidate at Pacifica Graduate Institute and resides in Maui where she lectures at the University of Hawaii Maui Campus.